

The Happiness of

M A N

In this **L I F E.**

By **G. NELSON**, Rector of *Oakley*, in
Suffolk.

D U R H A M :

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The Happongs



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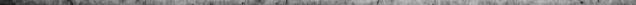
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This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor discoloration and small dark spots, possibly due to age or handling. A faint vertical crease is visible down the center of the page.





The P R E F A C E.

THOSE, that deny Revelation, reject the best Security that Mankind hath for a Future State, and deprive themselves of the greatest Comfort that is to be had in this World, that is, a Prospect of Future Happiness. The Scripture is all that we have to depend upon that we shall live after this mortal Life, and hath the best Evidence of Truth. *The Law of God is your Life, and his Word is established for ever in Heaven.* Deut. xxxii. 47. Psal. cxix. 89.

If the Holy Scripture is not of God, the Creator hath disregarded his indigent Creatures; without this, there have been no Notices from Heaven, that could be a proper Help to Men, after they had corrupted Divine-Worship, and fallen much lower than the first Man did. There is no Security for Pardon of Sin, but what is to be found in the Scriptures, nor is there any other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Acts* iv. 12.

The Holy Scripture is such a Revelation
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fion, as a considerate Man would wish for, and could not reasonably desire more, being very agreeable to the State of Man. There we see the Son of God foretold, and in due time more plainly revealed, who answers all our Necessities : and if Men were sensible of their want, they would wish for such an Advocate, who could plead with the Almighty, and procure for us Eternal Life, instead of Eternal Death.

I have laid out some Endeavours, to persuade my self and others to make use of those Advantages, which the Holy Scriptures offer to us, in Order to our Happiness in this World, and that which is to come, I have shewed the unhappy State, in which Sin hath involved Mankind, and how we may be restored to a Degree of Happiness in this Life, which is to be compleated in another State. I have in the Way explained Difficulties, with the Reasons why we are exercised with Trials, and must exercise our selves unto Godliness. 1 *Tim.* iv. 7.

To this excellent *End*, great Care should be taken of the *Education* of Children, that they may be seasoned with good Principles, and early acquainted with the *Holy Scriptures*. *Timothy* is commended for having known the Scriptures from a Child ; which should persuade all Parents to bring up their Children in the Use of those sacred Writings. Custom will render them familiar to them, and they will get a true *Taste* of Religion, so that *when they are old they will*
not

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not depart from it, but will be able to bear
all Things by Patience and Comfort of God's
Holy Word.

But there is a real fault in many Men,
that they are too much in Love with this
World, and too little regard another State;
many Parents have only this World at
Heart, in the Education of their Children,
and let Religion take it's Chance. This
may be the Reason that Grace is often want-
ing to Learning, and the learned not the
happiest Men. For what was censured a-
mong Heathens, is much more blameable
in Christians, that money is preferr'd to
Christian Virtue.

*Quærenda pecunia primum,
Virtus post nummos.* Hor. Epist. l. i.

This Age hath produced learned Men,
who have excelled in VINDICATION
of Sacred Truths. But profane Writers have
too much engaged Attention, and one Er-
ror begets another in it's own Image. The
Beauties of Poets are admired; and the
greater Beauties of the Scriptures are ne-
glected. Learned Men magnify the Gentile
wisdom, and put too fair a Construction
upon their Mythology; which tends to
excuse Heathenism, and diminish the Va-
lue of Revelation. The Gentiles might de-
sign by some Fables, to instruct Men in
Morality, and deter them from Vice; but
they promoted the Worship of False Gods,
and were carried away to Dumb Idols, 1
Cor. xii. 2.

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The Scriptures have set us right ; yet Learning takes a wrong turn, by over-valuing profane Authors, and raises a Prejudice against Religion, whence it comes to pass, that Men will give a fairer hearing to a Pagan Philosopher, than to a Christian Writer, and most value that Knowledge, which is so high in reputation. This same Bias carries away many Persons, to Value Men according to that Standard, and to slight others upon that very Account, for which they ought to be more esteemed.

If Men made an impartial Enquiry into the real worth of Gentile Writers, they would less esteem them, and more regard the Holy Scriptures. A great part of the Value, which is set upon the Poets, ariseth from their Antiquity ; some of the Holy Scriptures are far more ancient, and really much more excellent, yet find less favour among Men. They are especially more worthy, because they give an Idea of the supream Being, infinitely more great and Noble than could possibly enter into the Heart of a Heathen, and exalt our low Imaginations with the most sublime thoughts. The Holy Scriptures excell both in Poetry and Oratory, of which there are many instances.

The Jews, having little conversation with other Nations, were little acquainted with their learning, yet had greater advantages than others by the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. " That Nation produced Men
" of great Genius, without considering them

“ as inspired Writers, and they have trans-
 “ mitted to us many Divine Odes, which
 “ excell those that are deliver’d down to
 “ us by the antient Greeks and Romans,
 “ in the Poetry, as much as in the subject,
 “ to which it was consecrated.

I shall give one Instance out of many.

The Poetry of the 114 *Psal.* is exquisite,
 The Psalmist at first conceals the Deity, that
 he may introduce him more gloriously, v. 2.
Jacob was His Sanctuary, &c. The Poets
 were obliged to Fiction, but here are finer
 ornaments, and those adorn’d with Truth.
 The Sea saw that and fled, *Jordan* was
 driven * back ; the Mountains skipped like
 Rams, &c. He stands amazed at the great E-
 vent, and then speaks to insensible Creatures,
 as made sensible of the Divine Presence,
 What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fled-
 dest, &c. God appears on a sudden, and then
 the Wonder ceases, when the mighty Cause
 is known, Tremble thou Earth at the Pre-
 sence of the Lord, &c. Here the Poets Rule
 is observed in Perfection. — *Nec Deus*
interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus. Hor. de
 Arte Poet.

The Oratory of some of the Prophets is ex-
 cellent. The Prophet *Isaiab* hath the strong-
 est Words, to awake Attention and excite the
 Passions,

* HOREB and SINAI, two Tops of one Moun-
 tain, and other neighbouring Hills, or Mountains.

Exod. xix. 18. *Psal.* lxxviii. 8.

Passions, Ch. i. 2. He calls upon inanimate Creatures to testify against unworthy Men. Hear, O Heaven, and give Ear, O Earth ! For the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children and they have rebelled against me ; the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, but *Israel* doth not know, my People doth not consider. There cannot be a more elegant Expression, nor a more poignant Reflexion, nor a more just Reproof. It is applicable to all careless Men, who regard not their Maker.

It is a monstrous thing in Nature, that Man being endued with Reason, and much superiour to the Brutes, should fall below them in his Conduct. The Brutes answer the End of their Creation, and glorify God according to their Capacity ; but Man hath Reason in vain, who doth not acknowledge his Maker, or is unmindful of his Duty to him.

Therefore He calls the whole Creation to Witness against them, and condemn their careless stupidity, who by their Reason know not *that* God, in whom they live, and move, and have their Being.

The Gentiles were notoriously Criminal, and the Jews follow'd their Example, in their absurd Idolatrous Superstition. A small number of the Gentiles were learned, and has had some low Notions of a future State. Reason taught them some moral Virtue, and gave them obscure Hopes of Reward. But they went on with the
Mul.

Multitude worshipping the Creature more than the Creator ; professing themselves wise they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the uncorruptible God, into an Image made like unto corruptible Man. &c. Wherefore God also give them up to Uncleanneſs, &c. Rom. I, 22, 23, 24.

" Sacred ſtory gives a convincing Proof
 " of St. Paul's Eloquence, when the Men
 " of Lyſtra called him Mercury, becauſe
 " he was the Chief Speaker, and would
 " have paid him Divine Worſhip, as the
 " God that preſided over Eloquence. This
 " one Account of our Apoſtle ſets his
 " Character, conſidered as an Orator on-
 " ly, above all the celebrated relations of
 " the Skill of Demotheſenes and his contem-
 " poraries. His Speech before Agrippa, his
 " Diſcourſe upon the Reſurrection, are
 " truly great, and may ſerve for full Ex-
 " amples to the moſt excellent Rules. Lon-
 " ginus, altho' a Heathen, reckons St. Paul
 " among the beſt Orators of Greece.

Longinus lived in the third Century, and Plutarch in the ſecond of the Chriſtian Era, Men of great Learning and Vertue, yet were not converted to the Chriſtian Faith ; but were leading Examples againſt it, and probably are ſo to this Day. It may ſeem very ſtrange, that ſuch Men were not Chriſtians ; but there is no wonder in it, becauſe they were prepoſſeſs'd with a high Opinion of their Learning, and held faſt the Prejudice of Education, to-

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gether with a Pride in their own Parts, which Vice insinuates it self amongst many Virtues. Such a Disposition of Mind, and Opposition of the Truth, prevents the Divine Favour, which would open their Eyes; and the same Cause which kept them from Christianity, makes other learned Men renounce it.

But if the learned would bestow as much pains, in searching the Scriptures, as they do for profane Authors; if they would moderate their Opinion of the Gentile, and do Justice to Christian-Wisdom, they would improve the Happiness of Life and increase the Number of happy Men. They would better teach, what I have here attempted; for I do not pretend to excell. I yield the Preference to many Persons, who do not think fit to publish any thing: But as far as I am able to do for my self, I am desirous to promote in others, ————

The



The Happiness of Man in this Life,



I PROPOSE to enquire into the *Happiness*, that is intended for Mankind, and shall lay the Foundation upon the Truth of the *Holy Scriptures*, without which the World had been still more corrupted, and much more miserable than it is. The Necessity of *Revelation*, and the vast Benefit of the *Holy Scriptures*, might seem enough to well disposed Minds, to shew their Divine Original. All the rational Part of Mankind have always discovered the Weakness of Human Reason; and the Result of Infidelity is

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this

2 *Man's happiness.*

this, That GOD sent Man into the World, to make his Way through Darkness and Difficulty, without either Reason or Revelation for his Guide. A notable Discovery !

IT is probable, that GOD chose the Way we find, as most proper to the State of Men, to give them a proper Exercise; not an irresistible Evidence, but such as requires Thought, yet an Evidence sufficient: It is a most certain Argument, and will appear so to considerate Persons, for the Truth of Christianity, that Divine Power shewed itself, in the Lives and Acts of the first Preachers of the Gospel, together with their Piety, Sincerity and Sufferings, the Knowledge and Success of those Men, who were just before the meanest Sort of Persons; that they had many Adversaries, yet none could defeat those weak Instruments, nor prove their Doctrine to be an *Human Invention*.

IT cannot be denied, That there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*,
and

and such Holy Men as his Apostles. None can deny their Miracles, nor can it be proved, that they had any worldly Design; but proposed to lose by their Work, and rejoiced to suffer in so good a Cause. Millions of Witnesses succeeded one another, whom the Strength of Truth supported under the most cruel Persecutions. Truth was their solemn Profession, without which they had been very bad Men, and a Contradiction to all their Practice. They proved their own Assurance, because they willingly suffered, and had no other Prospect, but of a future Reward; without which certain Hope, they had been the most foolish Men, and of all Men most miserable; yet they thought themselves most happy, and indeed were the *wisest Men*.

THE Holy Scripture hath a Witness in itself, by distinguishing Characters of Divinity, above any Human Performance. It teacheth more excellent Knowledge than appeared any where at the same Time, or could be

4 Man's happiness.

be produced afterwards. It is the most ancient of all Writings, and was the Foundation of other Works, yet still above Human Compositions. It shews a Divine Author, by an unimitable Sublimity of Matter, and it's Stile is most excellent, tho' some have raised Cavils against it, thro' an Influence of Prejudice. GOD acted wonderfully for the Jews, and gave Demonstrations of his Spirit. || *Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them; and the Gospel came not in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance. 1 Thes. 1. 5.*

THE Scripture shews a Divine Author, by the Excellency of the Stile, and the Incapacity of the Writers. The Prophets, except *Moses*, had no Learning, and the *Hebrew* Tongue † is a narrow Language; yet they found

|| Nehem. 9. 20.

† Monsieur le-Clarke attempts to prove, 'That the Hebrew Tongue is rude, and unpolite, and therefore the Scripture more to be admired for it's Elegancy. Differ. 40.

found Expressions above the vulgar Strain, * above Human Learning, and equal to the best Eloquence. The Scripture is elegant, and hath many Beauties, yet it is plain and familiar, nicely adapted to it's Holy Purpose; there is an admirable Contrivance, carried on with the same Spirit of Holiness, by divers Persons in different Ages. The Doctrine is sublime, and yet the Holy Spirit, by a wonderful Condescension, hath accommodated itself to the Custom of Languages. There are such Charms in the Holy Scripture, *that nothing but an Adder, the Seed of the old Serpent, could stop his Ears against it,* Plal. 58, 4.

BUT whereas some have pretended, That Christianity was an Human Invention, because the Church is in a flourishing State, and it seems to be Mens Interest to support it; this is

* Constat sententijs refertam esse scripturam, quæ humanitus concipi non potuerunt. Calv. Inst.

is so far from being a Proof, that it strongly proves the contrary, as is manifest in History. The Christian's Zeal demonstrated, That they as firmly believed the Scriptures, as if they had seen the Miracles contained in them. There was a wonderful Zeal, which the Sense of Truth preserved, after that Miracles had ceased. This Zeal raised beautiful Churches, and disposed Men to great Liberality, in providing for the Ministers. Pious Works shewed the great Value that Christians set upon their Religion. They willingly offered their Wealth, because they were assur'd of the Truth, and parted with much in this World, *that they might lay up Treasures in Heaven.* Mat. 6. 19.

For after that Miracles had ceased, there was still a Confirmation of the Faith, because Christians were certain, That such Miracles had been wrought, and they were the more certain of the Divine Power, because extraordinary Works were done, which

no Man could afterwards perform. The same is a Confirmation to us, rather than if Miracles had continued. For if Miracles had not ceased, the Wonder would cease; the same Love of the World which blinded the unbelieving *Jews*, would rather make Unbelievers, if Miracles were more common; and if Men did not believe the Word of *Jesus Christ*, neither would they believe *tho' one rose from the dead*.

SOME are ready to say, there is still Need of Miracles, and some still pretend to them, because they have Need to support their Errors. But Truth doth not stand in Need, when firmly established in the Church, which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, to support it by a perpetual Evidence, and by rational Arguments: That Generation, which saw Miracles, declared them to the next, so that those Miracles confirmed the Faith, and their Works certified those Miracles. The Primitive Christians testified their Faith, when they suffered for

for it, and when the Church was settled in Peace, the same Zeal continued in Works of Piety; there was no Need of extraordinary Gifts, when ordinary Means became sufficient.

THIS is then the Reason why Miracles ceased, they were not necessary, but rather inconvenient, if common to every Age. God hath appointed proper Means for the Exercise of Men, and nothing will be done without them; He expects reasonable Endeavours, and will not do unnecessary Things, extraordinary Gifts are only fit for extraordinary Occasions. The watering of the Church was only necessary, when it was like a Grain of Mustard Seed; but when the Tree was grown up, the watering was no longer requisite. For altho' Miracles are ceased, yet Christ still speaketh these Things; his Word endureth for ever; and we still see him raising the Dead, casting out Devils, giving Sight to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, Speech to the Dumb, Feet to the Lame.

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FOR what *Christ* did then in *Periton*, he doth now every Day spiritually by the Church, and he still teacheth by his Word. *St. Peter*† having mentioned that glorious Vision, which he saw with *Christ* in the Mount, saith, *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take Heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and, a more perfect Knowledge of Christ, the Day-star, arise in your Hearts.* The Evidence is now rather stronger, because all Men saw not all the Miracles, but some One and some another, but now we see them all; and the Case is quite different from what it was. The World was to be converted from strong Prejudices, and old Customs were to be abolished. The Prejudices, that yet remain, or the old renewed, are unreasonable, since they may be convinced, if they will attend to Reason.

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† 2 Peter, 1, 19.

Quod corporaliter tunc faciebat Christus, illud Ecclesia spiritualiter quotidie facit.

THERE is indeed some Difficul-
ty in *Faith*, by the Myſteries of the
Goſpel; but that could not be a-
voided, becauſe theſe Myſteries were
to be revealed, that the Cauſe of
Salvation might be known; and
Faith might be a Virtue, which
which ſhould be capable of Reward.
The Son of God muſt be revealed,
and *Faith* in him the Means of Sal-
vation. The Faith of theſe Myſte-
ries muſt needs be difficult, ſeeing
we cannot comprehend them, and
they muſt needs be incomprehenſi-
ble, becauſe we muſt be taught of
God to believe; ſo difficult is this
Faith, it requires both our own Stu-
dy, and ſome Degree of Inſpiration,
to help our Beliet of ſo great Myſte-
ries. For we do not deny Inſpirati-
on; nor pretend to ſo much as ſome
do; there is ſtill a Gift of the Holy
Spirit, by which Chriſt has promi-
ſed to be with his Church, to the
End of the World, Mat. 28. 20.

THREE

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¶ We have received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might now the Things which are freely given us of God: But there is not now so large a Measure, as was given to the Apostles, because there is not the same Occasion for it, but only such a Portion of their Spirit, as is proper for our Occasion. A less Measure is sufficient, when our Trials are less, and other Advantages greater, by an Increase of Learning, and diligent preaching of the Word. The Gift of God is given so far as is needful, that is, such a Measure of Divine Grace, as doth not prevent the Use of Means, and our own pious Endeavours. We cannot rightly judge otherwise, because we see no Tokens of extraordinary Gifts; but the Spirit helps our Infirmities, and there is a Help to our Happiness, in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost, Acts 9, 31.

BUT there is a great Duty incumbent.

cumbent upon us; we are to act for
 our selves, and to do Things neces-
 sary to our Happiness. It is the Con-
 dition of this Life, That we labour
 for any good in our worldly Con-
 cerns, † all Things are full of La-
 bour. || He becometh poor, that deal-
 eth with a slack Hand, but the
 Hand of the diligent maketh rich.
 But if Men are born to Riches, they
 must labour for their Happiness,
 which chiefly consists in the Mind,
 in a good State of the Soul. † Keep
 thy Heart with all Diligence; for
 out of it are the Issues of Life. * He,
 that keepeth Understanding, shall find
 Good. § Apply thine Heart to In-
 struction, and thine Ears to the
 Word of Knowledge. || Take heed to
 thyself, and keep thy Soul diligently,
 not slothful in Business, serving the
 Lord. Rom 12. 11.

Men are apt to deceive them-
 selves, and neglect the Care of their
 Souls;

† Eccles. 1 8. || Prov. 10. 4. † Prov. 4.
 23. * prov. 19. 8. § 23. 12. || Deut. 4. 10.

At for Souls; but we must not expect Suc-
 cess, † without the necessary Means,
 Con- and a suitable Care to perform them,
 about It God had so pleased, washing
 Con- once had perfectly cur'd Naaman's
 of La- Leprosy, but he commands him to
 deal wash Seven Times, to signify the
 the repeated Care we ought to have, in
 rich using the Means he hath appointed,
 they for the spiritual Good of our Souls;
 inels, the Soul is the Seat of Happiness,
 kind, and there we must build up a happy
 Keep Life; * the Labour of the Righteous
 for tendeth to Life; and he is in the
 He, Way of Life that keepeth Instruction;
 find God is your Strength, *and the word*
 in of his Grace is able to build you up,
 the and to give you an Inheritance a-
 d to mong them that are sanctified. Acts
 ntly, 20, 32.
 the

W H A T is the chief Happiness of
 Man in this Life, and the Means to
 obtain it, may be expressed in One
 Word,

† Inter cuncta leges & percontabere doctos.
 Qua ratione potes traducere leniter ævum, &c.

Hor. Epist. Lib. 1.

|| 2 Kings 5, 10. * Prov. 10, 16, 16.

Word, *Wisdom*, but it will require many Words to teach it, and much labour to learn it. The wisest of Men was sometimes deceived. He had tried many Experiments, by some of which he made himself unhappy, and was convinced of his own Folly; he found by dear bought Experience, that *Wisdom* was the Means of Happiness, and Happiness itself consisted in Wisdom, the Wisdom of sincere Religion. † Happy is the Man that findeth *Wisdom*. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantry, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. *Wisdom is better than than Rubies, and all Things that may be desired.* Prov. 8. 11.

BUT other Men, not so wise as Solomon, are much divided in their Opinions. Many place Happiness in some vain Imagination, which is the Reason, that they never attain to the real Happiness. The Wisdom of Hu.

Human Learning is considerable, and makes fair Pretences to Happiness; but Men often grasp at the Shadow, and let the Substance fly away; Human Learning would be an Auxiliary, and *Gentile* Learning is of good Use, to shew the Vanity of *Gentile* Superstition, and invite us to search after Truth. But when Men over-value Human Learning, and have Confidence in themselves, they neglect to search after Truth; whence many become Deists, and want the Comfort of the *Christian Faith*, or Arians, and make a false pretence to that Happiness, which ariseth out of true Christianity.

BUT how disagreeing soever Men are in their Notions about Happiness or the Means to obtain it, yet Happiness is the Desire of all Mankind, and that Desire is an Argument of an Happiness to be obtained. There is a want in the Soul and every one seeks to have that supplied, supposing, that if they could procure such things as they long for, they should attain their

their End, and tho' they daily find themselves disappointed, yet still they are craving and never satisfied; because they seek the Living among the Dead, I mean, they seek for Happiness among perishable things, that can afford no Peace nor solid Satisfaction. *All the labour of a Man is for his Mouth, and yet the Soul is not filled.* Eccles. 6. 7.

It may seem somewhat strange, That all Men should agree in the End, and yet differ almost infinitely in the Means; but Men having once left God, the Fountain of Happiness, they search in vain the whole Creation to find it. One Man says, *Lo here*, and another, *Lo there*, and all the Creatures plainly answer, it is not in us. For the Fashion of this World passeth away, and there is nothing equal to the Desires of Men. † He that loveth Abundance is not satisfied with Increase; this also is Vanity. *For Man walketh in a vain shadow, and*

† Eccl. 5. 10.

findeth himself in vain, he heapeth up Riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. Psal. 39, 6.

THE Creatures indeed lead us into the Creator, and in him we find our *Happiness*. It is a rational Conclusion, That He, who is Almighty, and the Author of all good Things that we see in this World, is able to give a perfect Happiness, and will communicate his *Goodness* to proper Objects, as it shall be agreeable to his *Wisdom*. God hath an infinite Power to further Acts of *Goodness*, and in him must consist all *Happiness*; it is therefore our Interest to please such a *Being*, and we shall find our Happiness in being agreeable to him. We owe a Duty to God as our Creator; and to do that Duty is the greatest *Wisdom*, because it will make us happy in him: And that Divine *Wisdom*, which will make us happy for ever, is also the chief Happiness in this Life; *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom.*

Let us then observe what Sort of Happiness is attained by *Wisdom* and what Kind of *Wisdom* procure that *Happiness*.

THAT *Happiness* is intended for Mankind, we may argue from the Dignity of Man, and the Goodness of God, disposing him to provide for such a Creature. The Soul of Man hath a noble Capacity of *Reason*, by which he can enquire after his Maker, and adore his mighty Benefactor. He is able to think of him, and might propose to himself some Benefit, by employing his Thoughts about him. His *Reason* suggests to him, That God is a Power to be depended upon, and will do good to those his Creatures who piously put their Trust in him, and behave themselves orderly before him, seeing such Behaviour is honourable to the Author of his Being; and we ought to Honour him with our Substance; it is our Duty to love him, and to serve him with

with all our Heart, and with all our

Gen. 1. 13.

Men might have discovered so much by their own Reason, when they were under the Law of Nature, and so they ought to have done, though it was only a rational Conjecture; they should have enquired after God, and thought of some Duty agreeable to him. God seems to have left Men to their own Reason, in the first Ages of the World, and to have put them upon a Trial of their Faculties, with the Help of some obscure Hints, and the Apparances of Angels, to intimate another World, which the Patriarchs would shew to their Families: But the Generality of Men was very careless, and still more corrupted their natural Endowments. Their Neglect was a great Offence, and the Cause of their being neglected. They had deserved no Favour, nor any Assistance from Heaven.

BUT God respected Abraham's Carefulness, and from him raised a

pecu-

peculiar People, to whom he revealed himself. † He shewed his Word unto *Jacob*, his Statutes and his Judgments unto *Israel*. He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them; yet the *Gentiles* might have learned useful Knowledge from the *Jews*, when they heard of God's mighty Works; and they were intended some Benefit, if they would have sought after it. But they knew not the true God, they fell away into Idolatry, and defiled themselves with abominable Sins, therefore God punished the *Canaanites*. *The Land is defiled, therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it.* Lev. 18. 25.

MEN might have conjectured by Reasoning, That there is a future State, and Life intended for reasonable Souls; but this is but a Kind of Darkness, till we are assisted by Revelation. God being offended did not speak to the Nations, nor did he speak

† Psal. 147, 19, 20.

revelation speak to the Jews all his Mind; but Word there was only a Dawn of the Day, and his all the Sun of Righteousness arose: with no Temporal Things only were promised them; † yet from these a future Hope was raised, and on them a further Trust was founded. A future State was hid in Types, and hinted God's in some Expressions; yet only a little at a Time, so as still to leave Room for future Discoveries, till the Messiah should come, who was to compleat the Revelation of Divine Things.

THE obscure Prophecies and Hints of a future State, were abundantly more useful than the Poetical Fictions; which were indeed invented to keep People in awe. Truth was more available to make Men fear another World, and to hope for Divine Favour, to preserve their Beings in Life. These Hints exercised Men's Reason;

† The Promise of Canaan signified a future State, by which that Promise was made good to those that died before it was literally fulfilled.

son, and it was their Wisdom to observe them, till God saw fit to give clearer Revelations. * This is your Wisdom and Understanding in the Sight of Nations, which hear all these Statutes, and say, Surely, this great Nation is a wise and understanding People. || *Forget not the Lord thy God, who led thee through that great and terrible Wilderness, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter End. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End.* Deut. 32, 29.

THESE Expressions intimate another State, after the End of this Life, in which Men shall be better or worse, as they have behaved in this World; and our Reason whispers the same Thing, as Balaam understood 'It, tho' he did not practise accordingly. † *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like*

* Deut. 4. 6. || Deut. 8. 15, 16. † Num. 23, 10.

like his. † But the more sure Word
Faith, *The Righteous hath Hope in
his Death.* The several Composers
of the *Psalms* frequently express their
Trust in God, and a Belief of a fu-
ture State. † *God is my Portion
for ever, || in his Favour is Life;*
and because we have Need of Di-
vine Assistance, the *Psalmist* expres-
seth his Confidence in God, * *Thou
shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and
afterwards receive me to Glory:* But
then we must endeavour for our own
Good, *Hear Counsel, and receive In-
struction, that thou mayest be wise
in thy latter End.* Prov. 19. 26.

GOD was provok'd to forsake
Men, who had lost the Knowledge
of him; yet he sent his Word, to
make himself better known, in Order
to their *Happiness.* The Scripture
joins with our best Reasonings, and
is a necessary Help to our fallen Na-
ture. There we make new Discove-
ries of God's Love to Mankind, and

see

† Prov. 14. 32. † psal. 73. 24. † psal. 30.
* Psal. 73. 26.

see the Grounds of *Future Hope*.
 The Way of God is perfect; the
 Word of the Lord is tried, He is a
 Buckler to them that trust in him.
 || His Testimonies are wonderful, and
 incline the Soul to keep them:
 and he that getteth Wisdom loveth
 his own Soul. The Entrance of his
 Words giveth Light, it giveth Under-
 standing to the Simple. When Wis-
 dom entreth into thine Heart, and
 Knowledge is pleasant to thy Soul,
 Discretion shall preserve thee, and
 Understanding shall keep thee. † The
 Fear of the Lord is the Fountain of
 Life, to depart from the Snares of
 Death, and Wisdom giveth Life to
 him that hath it. *Prov. 7. 12.*

THE Holy Scripture improves our
 Knowledge, to shew us our *Happi-
 ness*, and how to attain it, and our
 Reason agrees with the Holy Scrip-
 ture. The strong Desire of Mankind
 after Happiness proves, that Happi-
 ness is somewhere to be found. Be-
 cause, a desire of good is bound to a cause

† *Psal. 18. 30. || 119. 129, 130. * Prov. 1. 2. † 14. 27.*

Because the Creator would not have
 planted in Man such a Desire as could
 be satisfied ; he would not have
 sent forth a Soul, so excellent a Creature
 to seek in vain to be satisfied. He hath
 made Variety of Food, equal to the
 Hunger and Thirst of the Body, and
 we may reasonably infer, That he
 hath provided as well for the Soul,
 which hungers and thirsts after Life
 and Happiness. *The Lord is good
 to all, and his tender Mercies are
 over all his Works.* *Plal. 145, 9.*

If God's Providence is not so
 good, Man is in a worse Case than
 the Brutes, whose Appetites are sa-
 tisfied, and they have no Apprehen-
 sions of Death. The Soul of Man
 hath a strong Abhorrence of Death,
 and a vehement Desire to live and
 enjoy a happy State ; yet it is ap-
 pointed unto all Men once to die,
 and no Man has found any perfect
 Happiness here ; the Soul is satisfied
 with nothing less than Immortality
 and Happiness uncorruptible: There-
 fore we conclude, that God hath

E 11. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

provided for Man, to satisfy the Desires of his Soul, according to his Capacity and Expectations. This is at once an Argument of our sinful State, at present, and of a better Life to come, † *He that findeth Wisdom findeth Life, and the Wise shall inherit Glory.* Prov. 3. 35.

BUT God is infinitely good, how then came Evil into the World? It is to be observed, That Divine Goodness hath no respect to Sin; but hath the utmost Abhorrence of Sin, and a perfect Agreement with infinite Justice, to destroy all Opposition against the Will of God. Disobedience to the Divine Will is an infinite Sin, as being committed against the infinite Majesty, and dishonourable to God; therefore the Sin of the first

Man was an infinite Evil, and infected Human Nature with an evil Disposition, || so that all Men were by Nature the Children of Wrath.

† Prov. 8. 35. || Ephes. 2. 3.

The first Man corrupted his excellent Nature which God had bestow'd upon him, and all Men received that Corruption, being descended from a polluted Body; for by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners, and by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all to Condemnation. *By one Man Sin entered into the World and Death by Sin; so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.* Rom. 5, 12, 18, 19.

DIVINE Justice might have condemned Man to the utmost Destruction, that Almighty Power could effect: But Divine Mercy provided, through the Son of God, That at present Judgment should take Place in part, *that is*, to deprive Man of part of his *Image*, which he had so heinously abused, and to permit Sin to have it's natural Effect, to bring him into a State of Corruption, so that the Divine *Image* was changed into a polluted Nature, and the same Nature was derived to all Mankind.

Adam

Adam begat a Son in his own *Likeness*, a weak, sinful and mortal Man, like himself: For his acquired *Image* is opposed to that of his first *Creation*. *In the Day that God created Man, in the Likeness of God made he him*, and then presently follows, *That Adam begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image.* Gen. 5.

1, 3.

THE Sin of the first Man was vastly great, and aggravated with most hainous Circumstances. He sinned in his Perfection, and broke the Order of Creation. He believed a Creature, and distrusted his Maker, when he had threatned Death. He chose another Way than that his Lord had prescribed, and would augment his own Happiness above the Measure that God had given him. He abused his own Perfection, because he did not consider who his Creator was, and how much he was obliged to him. He transgressed the Law of God, and corrupted his excellent Work, to the Dishonour of his

Like his Creator, when he should have
 Man, tender'd him the highest Honour he
 Image was capable of; acting quite con-
 Crea- trary to the End of his Creation,
 eated and the Will of his Creator, who
 made made all Things for his Glory, For
 lows, of him, and through him, and to
 own him are all Things, to whom be
 en. 5, Glory for ever; and of the Son also
 he same is said, as being equal to
 was the Father, All Things were created
 with by him, and for him. Rom. 11, 36;
 He Col. 1, 16.

THIS was original Sin, and the
 Origin of Evil in the World, the Dis-
 obedience of the first Man, which
 polluted Human Nature. The Sin
 of Man in his Perfection was exceed-
 ing sinful, and must needs be of very
 evil Consequence. There was sure-
 ly a Judgment in it, and as certain-
 ly a just Judgment, tho' the Manner
 of it is unknown to us. But we may
 apprehend in part, That Man having
 revolted from God, became as a
 broken Vessel, to be returned to the
 Earth, from whence it was taken.
 He

He separated himself from God's Favour, and there followed a Privation of Goodness. The Life of his Soul left him, and he became *dead in Sin*; every Soul of Man is polluted, being united to a Body of Sin, that is conveyed from the Image of the first Parent; *And the Carnal Mind is in Enmity against God: For it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Rom. 8, 7.

It is not to be wondered, That the *Evil* is so great, but rather that it is so little. The Case of Man is not so bad as that of the fallen Angels, who were punished with Destruction from the Presence of God, without a Possibility of Recovery. God might have destroyed Man for ever in the Extremity of Divine Justice, but because many were to descend from One, and would receive a natural Infirmary, the Judgment was mitigated, upon the Intercession of the Son of God, and Satisfaction to be made to his Honour. The Sentence of Death at present was exe-

Man's happiness.

uted in part, by a State of Mortality. The Divine mercy provided that the Evil was not so great, as might have been, and the Divine Wisdom so ordered, That Increase of Sin should increase the Punishment, and avoiding Sin should increase our Happiness. But this must be the state of Man's Life, *That as he is conceived in Sin, so he is (naturally) born to trouble, as the Sparks fly upward.* Psal. 51, 5. Job 5, 6.

That Now indeed we are punished, and must die in this World, for Sin; but then the same Goodness, which permits us to live here, will continue longer to rational Beings, which are very sensible of Happiness or misery. For this World is God's School, where immortal Spirits, cloathed with Flesh, are bred up for Eternity. There is a proper Discipline, and tho' it be mix'd with Evil, yet there is some Good to be found. || *The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord, and the*

Man's Happiness.

The same Goodness of GOD, which gives us the present Life, would allow some Sort of Happiness with it. This is our Business to enquire. *What is the chief Happiness Man in this World, and how it to be attained?*

It is our Work to act for ourselves, as becometh reasonable Men in Order to our Happiness, and Labour to attain it. It is the wise Order of Providence, That this Life be suitable to the State of Man, he is inclined to Sin, and therefore all good Things require Labour to obtain them, for the Exercise of Man to divert him from the Way of Sin. There is no Profit without Labour. * *and in all Labour there is Profit* especially, it is agreeable to Divine Wisdom, † that Man be exercised in Wisdom, and to ordain Happiness for Wise Men. No Man can be happy, except || he get Wisdom, *Happiness is the Man that findeth Wisdom.*

KING

* Prov: 14: 23. † Eccles: 1. 1. 2. 3. Psal. 73. 31.

Man's Happiness.

KING Solomon was endowed with the greatest Wisdom that ever any meer Man had ; yet he fell into great Mistakes, because he neglected his Wisdom, and drowned it in sensual Pleasures. * He took up a Resolution to lay Hold upon Folly, to enjoy Mirth and enjoy Pleasure, to give himself up to Wine and Women, and all the Delights of the Sons of Men, till he might see what was the Good for the Sons of Men, which they would do under Heaven, all the Days of their Life. Behold a mighty Project of a great Philosopher, and what a wonderful Success it had ! All was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, and there is no Profit under the Sun. Eccles. 2, 3, 11.

Thus men may try Experiments of all sensual Delights, and thereby hope to gratify that Desire of Happiness, which they find in their Souls : But these Pleasures only stupify, and make men forgetful both

F

of

of Good and Evil; and when they come to reflect and compute what Advantage they have made, it proves to be only Folly, and increaseth the misery of Life. The Soul finds itself upon the Brink of Ruin, and those past Pleasures are so far from satisfying, that the Remembrance of them will be grievous. *There is a Way that seemeth Right unto a Man, but the End thereof are the Ways of Death.* Prov. 14, 12,

WHEN men have been wicked, it is well if they can turn away from their Wickedness, and with Solomon attain to Repentance; it were much better, if they needed not so bitter a Repentance, and had not run the Hazard of not repenting at all. For when men have provok'd God with daring Sins, it is much to be doubted, whether he will grant them Repentance unto Life. His gracious Assistance is hardly to be expected, after a long Course of Disobedience;

Man's happiness. 25

How can we tell how soon God may be provok'd to forsake us. It is therefore the best and safest Way, to follow that Advice, which succeeded Solomon's Repentance. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth. Eccles. 12. 1.

THE wise man had returned to a better Consideration, and God was pleased to assist his relenting Thoughts, to bring him to a full Repentance; so that after all his Experiments, he confesseth the Vanity and Emptiness of all worldly Enjoyments, and saith, † Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of Man. || For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. ‡ The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding;

† Eccles. 12. 13. || Eccles. 12. 14. ‡ Prov. 1. 7.

ding; the Ear of the Wise seeketh
 Knowledge, and whose trusteth
 the Lord, happy is he. Prov. 10
 20.

THESE are principal Duties, to
 fear God, and to trust in him, and
 chief Acts of Religious Wisdom,
 which is the Means of Happiness.
 They signify to our Reason, not on-
 ly a present Happiness, but also a fu-
 ture State. For altho' a future State
 was not plainly revealed to the Jews,
 yet a Trust in God, and a Fear of
 his Displeasure, intimated more than
 the Fear of Men, who could only
 kill the Body, and more to be hop'd
 for, than the Good of this present
 Life. The Blessings, that were pro-
 mised to these Duties, seem'd to ex-
 tend farther than this poor World,
 and this short Life. † *Blessed is
 the Man that feareth the Lord, **
and blessed is the Man that trusteth
in him. The Son of God is the Ob-
 ject of the same Fear and Trust, be-
 cause

because he is one with the Father. ||
 If the Son, lest he be angry, and
 we perish from the Way, when his
 Wrath is kindled but a little. Ble-
 ssed are all they that put their Trust
 in him; by whose Blessing Light is
 shewn down to the Righteous. Plal. 97, 11.

THE Old Testament gave a great
 more Light into the other World, than
 the Writings of Philosophers, even
 these of the Divine Plato, and † Plato
 himself was instructed by it. The
 future State was not asserted as a
 Doctrine, but deduced from rational
 Conclusions. The Notices of a Re-
 deemer, tho' obscure in the Old Tes-
 tament, presaged a future Blessing
 to all Nations. The Translation of
 Enoch and Elia, shew'd another
 Place for good Men. Christ was
 known

|| Psal. 2. 12.

† Clem. Alex. saith, That Plato came in-
 to Egypt, where he was informed of the
 Jews Religion, and many of the Fathers ad-
 mired the Conformity there was in many
 Things between the Doctrine of Plato, and
 the Old Testament.

known to the Prophets, and there are many of their Sayings, which testify their Beliet; and this was their present Happiness, to hope for a future Reward. For altho' Sin worketh Death, yet Virtue will not be buried in the Grave, because there is a Sacrifice for Sin. *Unto the Righteous there ariseth Light in Darkness, and altho' the Dust shall return to the Earth, as it was, yet the Spirit shall return to God that gave it.* Eccles. 12, 7.

BUT let us chiefly attend to the Christian Scheme, and that will set our *Happiness* in a better Light; for before that more perfect Revelation, the Case of Mankind was not thoroughly known. The Commandments of God, are most perfect, according to his Righteousness, and the first Law of Nature. Man having fallen into a corrupted State, and his Understanding being darkned by Sin, God renewed the Law of Nature by verbal Commandments, to bring him back, as much as may be in this fallen

fallen State, towards his Primitive
Righteousness; for proper Means
must be used with Man, without de-
stroying his Liberty, to teach him
the true use of Life. Deut. 30, 19.

THE Law of corrupted Nature is
not right, it leadeth into Sin. † It
is the Law of our Members war-
ring against the Law of our Mind,
and bringing us into Captivity to the
Law of Sin; that is, a corrupt In-
clination contending against right
Reason, and oftentimes prevailing o-
ver it. But || the Law of God is
perfect, converting the soul. ‡ The
Law is Light, and Reproofs of In-
struction are the Way of Life. Yet
no Man could be perfect and live by
his own Righteousness. We do many
Things contrary to the Will of God.
In many Things we offend all. §
There is none Righteous, no, nor one,
all are guilty before God. For if
there had been a Law given, which
could

† Rom. 7, 3: || Psal: 19: ‡ Prov: 6, 23:
James 3, 2: § Rom: 3, 10, 12:

could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the Promise by Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Gal. 3, 21.

Now when we observe the Purcity of the Divine Law, and find ourselves not able to keep it, through the Infirmitie of our corrupt Nature this would be our Unhappiness. But the Son of God hath restored Mankind, so as there is a Way to be happy, partly in this Life, compleatly in the Life to come. † For through Him is preached Forgiveness of Sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all Things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did by the which we draw nigh unto God. Heb. 1, 19.

CHRIST

CHRIST by his Death hath reconciled God to all penitent Believers, and what the Jews foresaw, by obscure Hints, we now enjoy more completely; they had Christ in their Sacrifices, and we have all Sacrifices in Christ. Whosoever believeth, according to the Gospel, with the Obedience of Faith, shall be freed from the Wrath to come, and be happy forever. No Pardon of Sin was provided for, nor promised in the Law of Moses, in Relation to another World. The Law only declared, what Sin is, and the Curse due to Sin, but not how to be delivered from it. The ineffectual Sacrifices shew'd a perfect Sacrifice to come, and the Law is our School-master, to bring us unto Christ. Gal. 3. 24.

FOR the Law shews us our Imperfection, and what Need we have of a Saviour, who could deliver us from the Sentence of Divine Justice. For it is not possible, that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sins; and it is as impossible, That

impure Creature should appear before God, and be acquitted in his Judgment. We cannot pretend to Perfection, when one of the greatest Saints disowns it. Not, says he, as though I had attained, or were already perfect. He, that always exercised himself to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man, desired to be found in Christ, not having his own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Lamb of Christ, the Righteousness of God by Faith. Phil. 3, 9, 10

It is only the Righteousness of Faith, that is accepted of God, as perfect Righteousness, and the Promise of Reward is annexed to that Faith, a Reward not of Debt but of Grace: For we cannot pretend to any Merit; we never could be out of Debt, unless we could have kept the whole Law, in the utmost Strictness and Purity of it, which none ever yet did, saving our Lord Jesus Christ, who kept it in our stead, and suffered the Penalty of our Disobedience, for whose sake it is, and by Vertue of

the Promise made to Believers, that
 we can have any Title to Life. *For
 the Wages of Sin is Death, but the
 Gift of God is eternal Life, through
 Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. 6, 23.

Now I propose to shew what is
 the chief Happiness of Man in this
 Life, according to the Gospel Insti-
 tution, without which there can be
 no Happiness at all: But we must
 remember, that perfect Happiness is
 not attainable in this Life, that being
 the very Thing which makes Heaven,
 and is reserved for the Life to come:
 It would be very incongruous to
 look for compleat Happiness in a
 Time of Trials and Afflictions; and
 therefore we are not only taught to expect,
 but are assured they are necessary for
 the Trial of Faith, and for the Exer-
 cise of Patience, and other Christian
 Vertues; so that when we speak of
 Happiness here, it is to be understood
 of such a Degree of Happiness as
 Mortality is capable of, and such as
 is consistent with the uncertain State
 of this present World, and this is at-
 tain-

tainable by *Wisdom*. Buy *Wisdom* and *Understanding*. *PROV.* 23, 23.

ACCORDING to the common Practice of the World, Happiness seems to consist in a plentiful Fortune, and most Men propose to make themselves happy, by getting Riches. This is the great *Diana*, that almost all the World worshippeth; it procures Honour, Power, and all the Conveniencies of Life; so that without it, Happiness seems to be but an empty Name. Hence, some Men are said to trust in Riches, as if it were a God that could deliver them. Men of low Degree will say, if I had so much Estate, or such a Place of Profit I should be a happy Man; and yet, if every Man had his Wish, he would find himself disappointed, and still something would be wanting to his Satisfaction. *There is no End of all his Labour, neither is His Eye satisfied with Riches.* *Eccles: 4, 8.*

BUT however Men may amuse themselves for a Time, this one Thought

Thought is enough to spoil the sup-
 posed Happiness of Riches; that one
 Day we must leave them, and then
 there will be no Place for any Treas-
 ures, except that of Virtue and good
 Works. These indeed will follow us
 into the other World; but worldly
 Wealth must stay behind. || Bles-
 sed are they that die in the Lord,
 that they may rest from their Labours,
 and their Works do follow them.
 There is a Recompence of Reward
 to come, which gives us a real Sa-
 tisfaction at present, and that will a-
 bide with us, *when Riches make
 themselves Wings and fly away.* Prov.
 23, 5.

It is not to be denied, That
 temporal Blessings are Streams pro-
 ceeding from the Fountain of Life,
 and serve to comfort and refresh de-
 caying Nature; but these Springs
 are apt to dry up, and we must seek
 for Happiness at the Fountain Head.
 It is also to be granted, That tem-
 poral

poral Enjoyments; being the Gifts of God, and by him designed for Man's Use, may be lawfully used in due Measure, and tho' they cannot of themselves afford Happiness; yet they may be so employed, as to promote it, if they meet with Divine Grace and Christian Prudence; which will the more glorify God by them, and lay up more † Treasures in Heaven. *For Happy is He that findeth this Wisdom, the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.* 1 Cor. 4. 4.

|| How much better is it to get this Wisdom than Gold, and to get Understanding, rather to be chosen than Silver! † Understanding is a Well-spring of Life, * according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. This Wisdom procures the chief Happiness in this World, and gives a true Relish to all other good Things. It sweetens every Condition of Life, and what some account

Mi-

† Mar. 6, 20. || Prov. 16, 16: † 22, *
1 Tim: 1: 11:

Misery, it turns into Happiness. It opens the Mind to great Conceptions and fills it with sublime Ideas, such as are not to be met with in the most exalted Science, and at the same Time agitates and delights the Soul, more than sensual Pleasures. *God doth grant unto us according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner Man, that Christ may dwell in our Hearts by Faith Ephef. 3, 16, 17.*

For Religious Wisdom is chiefly the Gift of God, and is therefore a greater Blessing, which is more abundant in the Gospel. There is an Increate of Favour, † the Riches of his Grace, above all former Mercies. It is also acquired by our selves, and in both respects, * Wisdom will be found of them that seek her early. We must be employed in our own Concern, and our own Wisdom will be

† Eph. 1. 7. * Prov. 8. 17.

be improved with Wisdom from above. The Word of God is our Help, and he blesteth the Use of his Word, to find the Heavenly Wisdom. † He filleth the Hungry Soul with his goodnes, and therein we find our Happiness. *The Wisdom from above is pure and peaceable, full of Mercy, and good Fruits.* James 3, 19

THE true Spirit of Religion heals the Nature, and sweetens the Tempers of Men, it corrects those Passions; and mortifies those Lusts, which are the Cause of Uneasiness to our selves, and Contentions with other Men. It composes the Soul, and clears the Understanding, by removing those Obstacles from it. It banisheth indeed all vicious Mirth, but in exchange, fills the Soul with perpetual Serenity, and an habitual Inclination to do good to others, and to be pleased with our selves. Then the Wisdom of being sincerely religious,

gious, in Conjunction with Faith in
the Son of God, brings unto us
Joy in the Holy Ghost. I Thes.
1, 6.

WHENCE ariseth a healthful
State of Mind, and a delightful
Hope of Eternal Life. † This is
the Riches of that Mystery, which
is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory,
* in whom, tho' now ye see him
not, yet believing ye rejoyce with
Joy unspeakable and full of Glory;
a vast Comfort to mortal Nature,
and Life to dying Souls, ‡ to look
for that blessed Hope, and the glo-
rious Appearance of the great God,
and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This
is the Happiness of Wisdom, and
this is the Wisdom of God in Christ
Jesus, who is made unto us both
Wisdom and Righteousness, Sancti-
fication and Redemption. I Cor.
1. 30.

H

As

† Col. 1: 27. — * I Pet. 1: 8: —
‡ Tit 2: 13

As this Revelation is most clear to the Wisdom of Christianity, is most perfect; and this Religion is as necessary to our Happiness in this World, as it is to our Salvation in the next. This Religion hath the Advantage of all other Things in this World: It shews a Way to a right Enjoyment of Life, by giving a Prospect of a better beyond it. The Kingdom of Grace leads unto the Kingdom of Glory, and carries with it a vast Happiness, a delightful Comfort of Mind. *Whereunto God hath called us by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hath given us everlasting Consolation* 2 Thess. 2, 14, 16.

THIS Prospect of eternal Glory, is the Comfort and Refreshment of our Souls, which doubles our Pleasures, and divides our Afflictions. Pain is less grievous unto us, so long as we keep in View the Pleasures of Eternity. There is Comfort in sufferings, seeing they bring in a vast

Man's Happiness.

§1

vast Advantage. † Our Light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh in us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

THE Gentile Philosophers aimed at a Kind of Happiness, which they called *Tranquillity of Mind*, but were very deficient therein; because, by *Wisdom* they knew not God, but were ignorant of *Truth*, by a false Conceit of their Knowledge. || They sat in Darknels, * and were in Bondage through Fear, under the Uncertainty of a future State. It was their Ignorance, which made them less miserable. But the less learned *Jews* were much more happy, and enjoy'd a Sort of Twilight under the

† 2 Cor. 4. 17: — || Mat. 4. 16: —
 * Heb. 2. 15:

the Law, which shewed a World to come, and gave a Delightful Hope to good Men, that they || should see the Goodness of God in the Land of the Living. But the Gospel giveth full Light, more comfortable to the Souls of Men, *the Son of Righteousness hath risen with healing in his Wings.* Mal. 4. 2.

THE Son of God cures the Pains of Sin, giveth new Life to Souls, † that were by Nature dead in Sin. If Men are rightly sensible of the Case of Mankind, they would think it a considerable Happiness, to be delivered from the Evil of Sin, as Men healed of bodily Pains, are more chearful than at other Times; but this Happiness is vastly increased by the Hope of *eternal Life*. There is a wonderful Satisfaction in the Knowledge of the Son of God; because, before Enemies to God and ‡ Children of Wrath, condemned by infinite Justice,

|| Psal. 27. 13. ——— † Eph. 2. 1. ———
‡ Eph. 2. 3.

to we are now his beloved Children,
ope and Heirs of his eternal Kingdom,
uld James 2. 5.

and HENCE ariseth the true Tran-
quility of Mind, which the gospel
eth calleth Peace. It is *Peace* with the
he Almighty, and *Peace* in our own
ul: Minds, as being in Favour with
in God. This is that inward Satisfa-
ns ction, which all the World cannot
† give; which gives a pleasant Relish
It to what we have, and enables us to
of bear the Lots of all. For he, that
n- hath the true *Riches*, which are the
ed Substance, is better contented, when
l- Shadows fly away. This is a Quiet-
r- ness of Soul, which every Christian
is may attain, and every good Christi-
e an finds within himself, accompanied
a with Strength of Mind, which sup-
ports him under all the Troubles of
this Life, until he arrives at *eternal*
Happiness.

THIS is that happy State of
Mind, which our blessed Saviour
bequeathed to his Disciples.

Peace

† *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the World giveth, give I unto you; let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; as much as to say, If you have Peace, you need no more; That comprehends all I have to give, and the best Thing you can enjoy, while you live in this World; therefore, Fear not what may befall you. For in me you have that Peace, || which passeth all Understanding, and shall keep your Hearts in the Knowledge and Love of God, which is better than Life itself: This will secure to you a perpetual Calm and Serenity, in the midst of all the Storms, that Earth and Hell can raise about you. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of Temptations,*
 2 Pet. 2. 9

THIS *Peace* of Mind is effected in us by the particular Operation of the Holy Ghost, who is actually our Comforter. It is the Holy Spi-

spirit of God, whom the Father
 sends in Christ's Name ; and they
 are one with the Father, having e-
 qual Power in Heaven and Earth.
 Here we can never want any neces-
 sary Assistance, to get true Wisdom ;
 and tho' we walk in the Valley and
 Shadow of Death, † yet to be spi-
 ritually minded is Life and Peace.
 If there be a Thousand Causes of
 Sorrow, yet still there is Matter of
 Rejoycing, because there is a great-
 er Power for us than against us,
 if we be sincere Christians, *The*
Lord of Hosts is with us, the God
of Jacob is our Refuge. Psal. 46.

7.

THE Holy Spirit is able to
 make us rejoice in the Pangs of Death.
 So great are the Rewards of the
 Christian Faith, suggested to us by
 the Holy Spirit, that good Men ne-
 ver want Matter of Joy and Glad-
 ness. ¶ They can rejoice in the
 Lord always, who is the God of all
 Com-

Comfort. The Happiness, acquired by Christian *Wisdom*, is as great as possible to be, according to every Man's particular State of Life. Our Hearts are comforted, being knit together in Love, and unto all Riches of the full Assurance of Understanding, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of Christ, *in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* Col. 2. 2, 3.

It is possible for Christians, * to count it all Joy, when they fall into divers Temptations for the Trial of their Faith. They can look upon Sufferings as Gifts, Honours and Privileges. For, saith the Apostle, † to you it is given on the Behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his Sake. This is, I doubt, too high a Flight for most of Christians, as it is a Contradiction to the generality of the World. How few are truly

* James 1, 2: — † Phil: 1, 19:

ly content with a plentiful Estate? But to rejoice in the hardest Circumstances is a higher Attainment, and yet we find many Instances of this in Holy Scripture. When the Apostles had been examined and beaten before the Council they rejoiced, *that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus.* Acts 5. 41.

BUT some Men act the quite contrary; † who rejoice in Iniquity, and rejoice not in the *Truth*. They, that prosper in the World, and should be the more thankful, yet the more despise Religion; and they seem to enjoy an easy Mind, when it is only an unthinking Mind. No Man that admits of serious Thoughts can be easy in his Mind, without the Comforts of Religion; and no outward Advantages can make a Man happy, except he be at *Peace* within. ‡ Men may count it a Pleasure to riot in the Day Time, and sport themselves

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selves

† 1 Cor: 13: 6: ——— ‡ 2 Pet: 2: 13.

selves with their own Deceivings, because they consider not that they do Evil: But howsoever Men may please themselves, *Peace of Mind* is the only real Pleasure. If we live || as having nothing, in *this* we possess all Things. *The Gospel of Peace is the true Riches of the World.* Rom. 11. 12.



CHAP.



CHAP. II.

Religion and Human Learning compared:

IT is to be remembred, That Learning seems to give the best Happiness in this Life, and indeed there is much Pleasure in some Parts of Human Learning, yet vastly short of true Religion. Learning in good Hands explains and defends the Truth, and promotes Happiness in Conjunction with Religion; but if it exalts itself against Religion, it is tainted with the greatest Pride, and will have the greatest Fall. Knowledge puffeth up imprudent Men, and some are spoiled by vain Opinions, so as to despise Religion. But whether they will or no,
Hu-

Human Learning declares for Religion, and teaches one necessary part of it, *that is*, Humility and Submission to Divine Revelation.

HUMAN Learning teaches us by its Imperfections; Learning is to be valued on several Accounts, it sweetens and mollifies Mens Dispositions, and very much improveth Human Nature: It is of excellent Use in Human Affairs, and is a serviceable Hand-maid to Divinity, so long as it keeps within due Bounds, without aspiring to be the Mistress. Yet still it is but Human, and as such, it must needs labour under Weakness and Imperfection, and so it is most useful. It teacheth by its Deficiency, to set a higher Value upon Divine Knowledge, which we find so much superior to it; and it is indeed but meer Folly compared with spiritual *Wisdom*. For the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; but the true Christian knoweth all Things necessary to his eternal Sal-

vation. *He that is spiritual judgeth all Things.* 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15.

I SHALL therefore endeavour to shew the Excellency of Divine Knowledge, above Human Learning, when they are distinctly consider'd, in Order to avoid the Abuse of *Human Learning*, and the great Danger of Learning abused, when it is employed against Religion. For Learning has been abused, as it is at this Day, and turned to vain Deceit, so that *St. Peter's* Prediction is sufficiently verified, † There shall come in these last Days Scoffers, walking after their own Lufts; and those lead other Men into a Contempt of Religion; so necessary is *St. Paul's* Caution, *Beware lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ.* Col. 2. 8.

Hu-

† Per. 3: 3.

HUMAN Learning consists in the Knowledge of *Words, Actions, or Things.*

THE Knowledge of *Words*, is of it self of no Use or Benefit at all. It is only to come at the Knowledge of *Things*, that we learn the Sense of *Words*; it is the Way and Means, not the End that we seek after, yet this Way is so long, and those Means so difficult, that oftentimes it costs a Man a great part of his Life and some employ it wholly in this Study; and all they have attained at last is, to call certain Things by sundry Names, without being at all advanced towards knowing their Natures. This is like a Man that should spend all his Time in making Keys for certain Cabinets, and never unlock any of them: For Languages are nothing else but so many Keys to open the Treasures of *Knowledge*, that are lock'd up in hard Words; yet vain Man would be admired, upon the Account of this vocabulary *Knowledge.*

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As to the Knowledge of *Actions* or Things done, which is called *History*, I grant it is useful in its Kind, as other Parts of Learning are. It is a pleasant Study, and gives a Man some Understanding of the Business and Transactions of the World. But in many Histories there is little certainty, and Human Infirmary in all. Many Historians are led by particular *Bias*, *Prejudice* or *Interest*, to relate Things partially, have some Persons to favour, or some Party to blacken, or some Party to serve. Besides no Historian can be an Eye or Ear-Witness of every Thing he is to relate, but must take much upon Trust. This Consideration abates the Pride of this Knowledge, and teaches a Man to humble himself with the Sense of his Imperfections; since at the same Time that he finds his Mind furnished with a Number of *Ideas*, drawn from History, he must also confess himself unable to distinguish the true Ones from those that are false.

There

T H E R E is then only the Know-
ledge of Things, that seems to aim
at satisfying the Understanding. The
Study of natural Causes, with the
Contemplation of the Works of
God, directed to a proper End, is
both commendable, and of excellent
Use ; and I think a Man may be
a little transported, when he has
made any Discovery beneficial to
Mankind, or mastered some Piece
of excellent Learning, after much
Pains and Study, yet this does not
amount to any solid and lasting Sa-
tisfaction. The most ingenious Ar-
tist cannot deliver himself from
Death; and then the Praise of Men
will not profit him. He may
envy his surviving *Fame*, except he
be a sincere Christian, whose Praise
is not of Men, but of God. Rom.
2. 29.

T H E R E are many Parts of Lear-
ning, which are more curious than
useful, and there is much Labour,
which tends to little real Advantage.
Suppose some great Mathematician

hath

hath found out some new Stars, and hath observed, That some of those formerly visible, are now vanished and dilappear; or if he can trace the Footsteps of a Comet, or make an Ephemeris for the *Satellites*; these you'll say are pretty Things: † But a Man that knows nothing at all but *Jesus Christ*, and him crucified, needs not envy him his great Satisfaction, and is full out as happy as he. *Solomon* that knew more than any Man living can pretend to, has computed the Value of all his Knowledge, and finds it amount to a mighty Sum, *even Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. Eccl. 1. 14.

BUT let us suppose for once, That Philosophical Speculations do bring some Sort of Pleasure and Satisfaction to the Mind, yet it is so fleeting and transient, it's gone almost before a Man can say he hath it; because it proceeds chiefly from the Acquisition, not from the Possession

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session

session of what he knows; for as soon as we are possessed of it, we neglect it, and fall to some other new Enquiry, from whence we promise to our selves further Satisfaction. But this like all the rest leaves us in the Lurch; it being only the Search after Knowledge, that gives our Minds a Diversion, and feeds them with Hopes of some imaginary Good which vanishes in the Possession, and yields no real Satisfaction. In the mean Time the Labour wastes our Strength, and there is no End of our Labour, *of reading Books there is no End, and much Study is a weariness to to the Flesh.* Eccl. 12. 12.

BESIDES this Insufficiency of Human Learning, to bring any solid Pleasure to the Mind, there is another Disadvantage, namely, the narrow scantling of our Understanding. For we know so few Things in Comparison of those that are unknown to us, that we have more Cause to be ashamed of our Ignorance

rather, than to glory of our Knowledge, according to the ingenious Confession of a learned Heathen, *† This I only know, that I know nothing.* The clearest Discovery is of our Imperfection, and the more any Man knows, he is more sensible of his Want. There is little Profit in his Labours, his Pleasure turns into Disquiet. It is a Vexation of Spirit, that a strong Desire is deluded, a mighty Hope is disappointed, and *† Hope deferred maketh the Heart sick.* So that in much Wisdom there is much Grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow. Eccl. 1. 18.

BUT Divine Knowledge is far more excellent, and gives a real Satisfaction to the Mind. * *I have seen an End of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* The holy Scriptures are inestimable Treasures of Knowledge, and

† Hoc tantum scio, me scire nihil.
*† Prov: 13: 12: * Psal: 119: 96:-*

and the more we search into them, we find the more delightful Entertainment. || *For whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that by Patience and Comfort of the Scripture we might have Hope; and this Hope will not be disappointed. He, that hath this Hope, is never weary of Enquiry, but is more and more delighted, to be more assured of Salvation. He daily finds Comfort in the Scriptures, till Hope ceaseth in Enjoyment. He that increaseth this Knowledge, increaseth Joy, and in much of this Wisdom, there is much Happiness.*

HE, that is spiritually minded, finds an exquisite Pleasure in the Knowledge of a happy Eternity; and if other Things do not answer, this quiets his Mind. His Pleasure increaseth with his Study, and he desires to improve all his Life, yet
con-

contented with what he can know, because that is sufficient to his main Design: but the pious Mind proceeds, and is glad to hear the Word of Truth. He holds a Commerce with Heaven, and receives Light from thence. God hath provided, † that all may learn, and all may be comforted. A Man of mean parts, if sober and pious, is capable of this Learning. * The inward Man is renewed Day by Day, and Strengthened in Understanding. He is then alway delighted, because he || grows in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Je-
sus

† 1 Cor. 14. 31. — * Cor. 4:16:

|| 2 Pet: 3: 18.

The Gentiles had some Notion of a Divine Influence in the Minds of good Men. SENECA said, every good Man is a Temple, and that the Divinity dwells within him. — Spiritus intus alit. — So that this is no new Thing; but what they spake by Conjecture, our Saviour hath revealed plainly, together with his own Divinity, Jo. 14. 23.

Jesus Christ, and is filled with Joy and Peace in believing, till he attain the Measure of the Fulness of Christ. Ephes. 4. 13.

THIS Wisdom of Religion is the Principal Thing, and the Holy Scripture the best Teacher of that Wisdom. For it is Wisdom from above. This is a Man's Chief Happiness, because he knows he is doing his Duty, which every Man owes to his Maker, and for which he was sent into the World. It is the most Manly Exercise, most agreeable to his principal Part, his rational Soul. It is the proper Action of Man; and he, that exerciseth himself therein, takes his Pleasure, † *He delights greatly in God's Commandments, and hath more Understanding than his Teachers, because the Law of God is his Meditation. He, that keeps his Precepts is wiser than the Ancients, and the Path of the Just is as the* *shin.*

shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day. Prov.

4. 8.

THERE is a mighty Satisfaction and Comfort, in having done our Duty. It is a Reward in Hand, and an Earnest of a future Reward. This Comfort doth naturally spring up in a good Man, † great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them. Acts of Piety and Virtue are not only delightful for the present, but they leave Peace and Contentment behind them. — These are Pleasures which we shall never be weary of, neither cloy'd with frequent Repetition, nor sated with long Enjoyment. There is no Pleasure so lasting, nor yet so delightful, as that which springs from a good Conscience, and a Mind satisfied with it's own Actions. When Troubles assault him, he can bear them with Patience, because they increase his Re-

Reward. *In the Multitude of Thoughts, the Comforts of God refresh the Soul.* Psal. 94, 19

THERE is indeed some Difficulty, to attain to such a happy State. The Temptations of the World, and a Man's own corrupt Inclinations, must be resisted and overcome: But then they give him the Opportunity of the Two greatest Pleasures, *Innocence and Victory*. The righteous Man finds a delicious Pleasure, in improving his Virtue, and despising the Pleasures of Sin. He is highly pleased with his Choice, that is agreeable to the Will of God, and he will not shrink from it. * *The Law of God is in his Heart, and his Footsteps shall not slide.* Whatsoever Difficulties Religion is attended with, they are all sweetened and made Easy, by the Assurance of a great and eternal Reward. We have God's own Word for our Security, and, as the Psalmist speaks, He

† Psal. 37, 31.

He hath magnified his Word above
all his Name. Plal. 38, 12.

HERE, as in other Passages of
Scripture, Name is put for any At-
tribute or Perfection of God; and
David praiseth him, because he
shewed his Word, and the Faithful-
ness of his Promises to him, more
eminently than his other glorious
Perfections, by which he is made
known to the World. His Promi-
ses were more to be admired, than
any other of his Actions; because
there were so many Difficulties in
the Way, and those Promises were
wonderfully accomplished. But
what was more than all the rest;
there was a Promise made to David
That the *Messias* should descend from
him, and his Faith was confirmed.
The Performance of other Promises
were Pledges to assure him, That
his more eminent Promise should
be accomplished in due Time; there-
fore he saith, *All the Kings of the
Earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when*

they hear the Words of thy Mouth.

Plal. 138, 4.

Now the World is more happy, having received the Promises, if they will apply them to the Use of their Souls. God hath more highly exalted his Word, and his Mercy is above all his other Attributes. Many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see those Things and have not seen them, and to hear those Things which ye hear, and have not heard them. All have had the Opportunity to accept of God's Mercy, and to rejoice in his Salvation. St. Paul celebrates the Faith of many pious Men; yet, saith he, they received not the Promise. The *Messias* was to be a Blessing to all Nations, both before and after his coming; but his coming was the Perfection of all Blessing, God having provided some better Thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Heb. 11. 39. 40.

WHAT should be the Meaning of all these Promises, which were to be fulfilled wonderfully, that God's Designs might be consistent with Man's Liberty? To what Purpose were so many Prophecies of the Offspring of *David*, if he was only a Teacher in this World? Yea, he was *David's* Lord, and had another Nature, in which respect he was not the Son of *David*, but the real Son of God, whose † Kingdom shall have no End. There were no Promises nor Prophecies concerning *Moses*, nor any *Gentile* Teacher of Morality, but abundance of the *Messias*, which were wonderfully accomplished, so as not to destroy Mens Liberty, but to engage their Wills to seek their own Happiness. It is the Unhappiness of Men, that they will not hear the Word of Faith, nor know the Things that be-
 long

† Psal. 145. 13. Isa. 9. 7. Dan. 7. 14.

Micah 4: 7. Luke 1: 33.

† Rom: 8, 10.

long to their Peace. Luke 19
42.

THE Word of God is the Help of our Reason, to direct us both to the present and future Happiness, and make the Way pleasant to us. We make new Discoveries in the Works of Providence, vastly surpassing the Works of Nature. We are agreeably surprized, to see the admirable Methods of Divine Wisdom, to bring about the Designs of God, without infringing the Liberty of free Agents. We stand amazed at the boundless Extent of God's Knowledge, without putting any secret Force upon Man's Will, yet we find the perverse Will of Man often influenced, or directed or defeated by an invisible Power. *He hath prepared his Throne in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* Plal. 103, 19.

FOR it is an establish'd Rule with God, to permit Man to use his natural Liberty, and therefore he does not so discover himself, as to over-

power Human Nature ; yet, he so manifests himself by the Wisdom of his Providence, That he is known to govern the World. He changes the Purposes of Men, as he turned the Heart of *Esaú*, when he came out in great Rage against his Brother *Jacob*. He curbed the Pride of *Rharaoh*, † *That he might make his Power to be known*. We find both Miracles and Providences, which both divert and instruct the Mind. They teach us to trust in an invincible Power, and to rejoice in his mighty Protection. They lay the Foundation of *Hope*, That God will increase his *Favour*, if we be his dutiful Subjects ; *and that makes even his Laws to be our Delight*. Psal. 119. 77.

BUT then we find ourselves deficient, and not able to keep the *Law* of the Divine Majesty ; What shall we do to be saved ? The Holy Scripture shews us what neither the
Light

Light of Nature, nor all Human Learning could discover, viz. *The Great Salvation of God.* It is amazing to observe the Work of our Redemption; it would be beyond the Belief of Mankind, but that it is so well proved in the Scriptures. It is above our Reason to comprehend, but when it is revealed, it is very agreeable to Reason. For God infinitely hates Sin, and his Laws should be strictly obeyed, † yet he is reconciled to sinners, by the sufferings of an infinite Person, being equal to the Offences done against an infinite God. This is a Mystery full of Wonders, || which the Angels desire to look into, to contemplate the Wisdom of God; wherein Man may always improve his Knowledge, and increase his Joy with his Understanding.

MANY Wonders attended the Law, which are a delightful Subject of Meditation. * *The Ministration*

tion of Condemnation was glorious, how much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory? The Law was attended with Miracles and Prophecies wonderfully fulfilled, which abundantly confirm the Authority of the Holy Scriptures; but the greatest Wonder was not visible to the Eye. The Gospel was hid in the Law; for altho' the Law itself only condemned Sin; yet it had never been given for this Life only; but that God intended by some Means, to preserve the Life of Man, altho' the Manner was not expressed, but represented in Types and Figures. This was the Exercise of good Men, and David prays for divine Help, *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold the wondrous Things out of thy Law.* Plal. 119, 18.

It is wonderful to observe, how God's Designs were carried on with some Obscurity, and there was good Reason for such Management, viz. That *Free Agents* should not be hindered from acting in a natural way

nor

nor should be under a Necessity to believe. For if the Evidence had been irresistible, the Actions of Men had not been free, and the Things could not have been brought about; the *Jews* would not have crucified our Saviour, and then there had been no Sacrifice for Sin. It was also agreeable to the Divine Wisdom, that Man's Mind should be exercised upon the most noble Subject of Religion and eternal Life; at the same Time providing, That none should want Means of competent Knowledge, who were careful to enquire after God; who loveth those that love him, *and those that seek him early, shall find him.* Prov. 8. 27.

Now the Gospel is more glorious, by a clearer Revelation, and a larger Measure of Grace to help our Understanding; *¶ and Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness, to present every Believer perfect before the Judgment-seat of God.*

God. Now the Divine Mercy accepts of Faith instead of perfect Righteousness, if we are careful to observe the Law. Now God accepts of less than we are able, and Repentance for many Failings. But the better we keep the Commandments, we shall be more in Favour with God, and receive more Benefit from the Son of God, to advance us higher in his Kingdom: For † God rewardeth every Man according to his Work, yet infinitely more than he deserves. * He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; God hath given unto us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. I Jo. 5:11.

WE can with great Pleasure entertain our Minds, upon the Mercy of God in Christ, who makes that his beloved Attribute, and in a Manner more than infinite. For his Justice is infinite, and his Mercy transcends his Justice. || According
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† Psal: 62: 12: • John 3: 36: || 1 Pet: 1: 2:

to his abundant Mercy, he hath be-
 gotten us again unto a lively Hope
 by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
 from the dead. This is not like o-
 ther Objects, which being thorough-
 ly understood, cease to divert the
 Mind, and are laid aside as empty
 Things. The Pleasure arising from
 the Knowledge of the Son of God,
 is great and noble and hath this Ad-
 vantage above all others, That there
 is perpetual Matter of Employment
 for the Inquisitive faculties of Human Rea-
 son, and still it increaseth our Admi-
 ration. — It will exercise Man's
 Thought to the End of the World,
 and for ever be our heavenly Con-
 templation.

The Gospel hath a peculiar Ex-
 cellency, that it transcends the high-
 est, and descends to the lowest Ca-
 pacity. The Knowledge of Christ
 exalts our Affections, and the mean-
 est Men are capable of being affect-
 ed with it. It is easy to vulgar Appre-
 hensions to know the Love of God in
 Christ Jesus. All Men may be sen-
 sible

file of that Mercy, † whereby God was in Christ reconciling himself to the World. ‖ The Poor have the Gospel preached to them, and they can be made rich in Faith. The strongest Understanding cannot fully conceive it, yet it may be perceived by the weakest Mind. So that all Christians may be happy in the Peace of God. The Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Phil. 4. 7.

SUCH Happiness is the Peace of God, it will always be the Object of Admiration, and can never be enough admired; nor is it known to any but him that hath it, and to him it is known by Degrees; so that he still perceives something to remain, which cannot be fully explained, yet still is the Subject of Meditation. † It is represented by the hidden Manna, and

† 2 Cor. 5. 19. † Mat. 11. 5. † Rev. 2: 17:

and the *white* Stone, which Christ gives to him that overcometh. If the Philosophers Stone could be found, this would be more excellent. It is the substantial Philosophy, and the most perfect Knowledge, tho' we cannot know it all in this Life. But it will still increase, and improve our Happiness, till it is compleated in Heaven. *We know the Love of God, which passeth Knowledge, so that we may be filled with all the Fulness of God. Eph. 3, 19.*

THUS we see how *Divine Knowledge* infinitely surpasseth *Human Learning*, and the Imperfection of *Human Learning* teaches more to admire *Divine Knowledge*. There are Difficulties of real Worth in *Holy Scripture*, which reward a diligent Search with *true Pleasure*, and may exercise the most learned; and there are plain Matters for the unlearned, which afford them abundance of *Comfort*. The Word of God is fitly compar'd to the Light, and in Comparison of it, *Human Learning*

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ing is Darkness. Light is so beneficial, that without it, the World would return to the old *Chaos*; and as it is experienced in the *Gentiles*, without the *Light* of God's Word, the Souls of Men would wander in the dark. There is the Testimony of two Kings, that were famous for Wisdom and Conduct. The one says, *The Commandment is a Lamp*, and the other, *Thy Word is a Light unto my Path*. Prov. 6. 23. Psal. 119, 105.

THERE is a great Pleasure in reading the Holy Scriptures, wherein we are assisted by good Interpretations, and this is the best Use of *Human Learning*. Every Man should employ his Mind, and improve his Knowledge, as far as his Condition of Life will allow, and there he will find his best Recreation. We are delighted with new Discoveries, which we did not expect, and are glad to clear up some Doubts, which gave us some Uneasiness. We rejoice to master a Dif-

ficulity, which before we could not understand. In the mean Time, we should not strain above our Capacity, nor make too curious Enquiries into the mysterious Parts of Religion; but when the Object proves too hard for us, we should advance our Faith by Humility, and conclude our Study with Amazement. *The Riches of Christ are unsearchable.* Eph. 3. 8.

Do you then desire to be happy? Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Scriptures will shew you how to find it. Would you have Riches join'd with Pleasure? See here it is, † The Judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than Gold, sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-comb. Would you have your Eyes enlightened with Knowledge, and your Hearts filled with Joy? This also is here to be had. * The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart, his

Man's happiness. 27

Commandments are pure, enlighten-
 ing the Eyes. Would you have
 your Souls converted to God, that
 you may be for ever happy? The
 Law of the Lord is perfect, con-
 verting the Soul. Would you have
 the most excellent Wisdom? The
 Scriptures are able to make you
 wise unto Salvation, through Faith
 that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim.
 3. 15.

The COLLECT for the Second
 Sunday in Advent.

Blessed Lord who hast caused all
 Holy Scriptures to be written
 for our Learning, Grant that we
 may in such wise hear them, read,
 mark,

mark, learn and inwardly digest
 them, that by Patience and Comfort
 of thy Holy Word, we may embrace
 and ever hold fast, the blessed Hope
 of everlasting Life, which thou hast
 given us, in our Saviour Jesus
 Christ. Amen.



The COLLEGE for the Second

Session in 1661.

CHAP.



CHAP. III.

*The Nature of that Wisdom which
produceth Happiness.*

I HAVE shewed what Sort of
Happiness is attained by Wis-
dom; for the Use of this present
Life; it consists in a happy State
of Soul, or a true *Tranquillity* of
Mind, grounded upon the *Faith* of
Jesus Christ, and the *Practice* of
Religious Duties. It is a *Peace*
within a Man's own Breast, upon
a comfortable *Hope* of being in the
N Fa-

Favour of God, together with Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. This is Wisdom and Happiness in Conjunction, such Wisdom as the worldly Wise and learned Sages could never teach, and such Happiness as the World could neither give nor take away. *If any Man is otherwise minded, and think that he knoweth any Thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* 1 Cor 8 2.

BUT some Men have little or no Apprehension of this Happiness, because they do not employ their Minds about it, and seem to have a sound Mind, when it is only an inconsiderate Mind. They may delude themselves, † saying, *Peace, Peace*, when there is no Peace; because they consider not their Ways. But no Man, that hath just Thoughts, can be easy in himself, without the Comforts of Religion; nor are all external Goods sufficient to make
Men

Men happy, if they are not at *Peace* within. However Men may be pleased with a false Peace, the true One is a real Pleasure. In the lowest Circumstances, in Dishonour, in Sickness, in acute Pains, there is a far greater Happiness with Peace of Mind, than Riches, Honour, Health, or the most refined Pleasures, or all of them put together, can administer without it; and this is the proper *Effect of Wisdom*.

I come now to shew more particularly, the Nature of that Wisdom, which produceth Happiness. It is not the Wisdom of gathering Money, and accumulating Wealth, nor the Wisdom of State, nor the Art of Government; nor the Wisdom of Address and cunning Insinuation; in a Word, not the Wisdom of this World, that comes to nought, as the Apostle speaks; but it is the *Wisdom* of being sincerely pious and religious. It is a spiritual Wisdom relating to the Soul of Man,

† and he that gets this Wisdom loveth his own Soul. || It is the Wisdom of God in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us both Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. *It is Wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without partiality and without Hypocrisy:* James 3, 17:

THIS Wisdom is acquired by our Study, assisted by our inward Instruction from God, and altho' there is a Divine Assistance, yet it is not an easy Attainment, nor will be attained by careless Men.——Wisdom is not found by Chance, but by a diligent Search, and our own Endeavour is the Condition of receiving Divine Assistance. If thou incline thine Ear to Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding; if thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding; if thou *seekest* her as Silver,

ver, and *searchest* for her, as for hid Treasures; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God. *For the Lord giveth Wisdom; out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding.* Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

THE Gospel saith, † If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. — It seems, Wisdom may be had for asking; but then, as the Apostle adds, He must ask in Faith, nothing wavering; he must be constant in such Qualifications, as accompany Faith. Our own Endeavours must be used to to obtain what we desire. It is the Condition of the new Covenant, *it is the Law of the Gospel, || That we labour first for the Meat that perisheth not, as we do for that which perisheth.* He that asketh of

† James 1, 5. || John 6, 27.

of God, must be qualified for asking, and act as a reasonable Man. Eternal Life is the Gift of God, and it is purchased for us by *Jesus Christ*, yet it is not assured to any Person, but under certain Qualifications, which are prescribed in the Gospel. All the Gifts of God have this Condition annexed to them, *we must labour in the Lord.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

For God will not be our Servant, to do for us, what we are able to do for our selves. He will not instruct us by his Spirit, where our own Reason is sufficient. He reasonably expects a Duty from us, as we have Ability to serve him: Therefore he would not continue his extraordinary Gifts longer, than the Church had need of them; but having given all necessary Assistance, as the weak State of the Church required, he then left Men at Liberty to use their natural Powers, and improve themselves by Human Learning. Yet ordinary
 Gifts

Gifts still continue; and they are no less Gifts, and not less to be valued, altho' we have some Work to do. The Fruits of the Earth are God's Gifts yet we must labour for them, and these only support a mean Body for a few Years; but spiritual Gifts nourish the Soul unto eternal Life; therefore infinitely more valuable than our Work; † *and without Christ we can do nothing.* || *For our Sufficiency is of God.*

WE are but unprofitable Servants; all our Services are not so much as a Pepper Corn, in Comparison of the Estate, which God is pleased to bestow upon us; yet he accepts these Acknowledgments; and surely it is our greatest *Wisdom*, to present them in the best Manner, with Humility and Thankful-

† John 15. 5. || 1 Cor. 3. 3.
These two Texts join'd are a full proof of Christ being God, one with the Father in Nature. For it is one God, of whom is our Sufficiency, and without whom we can do nothing.

fulness. It is the necessary Preparation of *Wisdom*, to form a right Judgment of Things, to give every Thing it's just Value, to have great and noble Thoughts of God, and proper Ones of ourselves ; and to be always upon our Guard, that we may not be led by false Appearances, nor imposed upon by erroneous Opinions ; if we act like reasonable Men, and † rightly value Things most excellent, we shall by God's Help find that *Wisdom*, which will make us *happy*, both here and hereafter.

BUT I am to speak of *Wisdom*, as it brings a present Happiness, and shall now shew more particularly, in what several Acts it discovers it self, of which these are the Principal, *viz.*

First, *Consideration.*

2dly, *Moderation.*

3dly,

3dly, Government of the Passions.

4thly, Contentment.

5thly, In making our Calling and Election sure.

6thly, In securing a good Conscience.

First, A Wise Man having any Design or Enterprize in View, will consider well what he aims at, and how to accomplish it. * For what Man intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the Cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it. In like manner, he, that proposeth Happiness to himself, will consider what Degree of Happiness is to be expected, and how it may be best attained. If he aims at perfect Happiness in this Life, he will but impose upon himself; so that herein will be found neither Happiness nor Wisdom. For the greater that any

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Man's

* Luke 14. 28.

Man's Expectations are, if he succeed not, the greater is his Unhappiness and Disappointment. A Wise Man therefore bewares of making a false Step at first, lest all the rest prove unsuccessful, and he be found contriving Mischief to himself, instead of Happiness, and aggravating upon himself the Common Miseries of Mankind.

CONSIDERATION then is a main part of Wisdom; it puts us in Mind, that Heaven is not to be expected upon Earth; and that we must be content with such a Measure and Degree of Happiness here, as is consistent with a State of Probation and Mortality. We are taught to wait for Afflictions in this Life, and that such Trials are necessary, for the confirming our Faith, for the Exercise of Grace, for the purifying our Manners, and that Patience may have its perfect Work, in order to obtain a future Reward; I say, since the Scripture abundantly teaches all this, for us at the same Time to ex-

perfect an undisturbed Ease and perfect Felicity, is not a part of Wisdom, but of Folly and Madness. *Every prudent Man dealeth with Knowledge.* Prov. 13, 16.

So that by temporal Happiness we must not understand a Freedom from Sickness and Pain, Grief and Tears, Mortality and Death, but only the most comfortable State of Life, that the present Time is capable of, according to every Man's respective Circumstances; which, tho' it come far short of Perfection, yet it is considerable, and well worth looking after. Now this is attainable by Wisdom, and happy is the Man that finds it. If then we are oppressed under any Grievances, Wisdom teacheth us to consider, *That these Things happen alike to all Mankind, that this is not our resting Place, that the strong Hold and Fortrefs of our Happiness is Peace of Conscience and Hope of Salvation;* and that, as without this, all the World cannot make us happy, so having this.

this Security, all that the World can do against us, cannot break out *Peace* nor shake our *Felicity*.

It was the Want of this Knowledge, that made the great Philosophers of old so uncertain about † their *summum bonum*, or *Chief Good*. For altho' they taught many notable Lessons about it, yet they knew not where to place it, for want of a sure Foundation; nor could they enforce it with that assured Hope of immortal Life, which Christianity affords. † This only hath brought Life and Immortality to Light. Now *Wisdom* suggesting this Consideration, doth strengthen and fortify Resolution; so that, as a Rock bids Defiance to raging Tempests, our
Hap.

† Varro computed near 300 Opinions concerning the SUMMUM BONUM. — Marcus Varro in libro de Philosophia tam multam dogmatum varietatem diligenter & subtiliter scrutatus advertit, &c. Aug. de Civ. l. 19. c. 1.

† 2 Tim. 1. 10.

Happiness remains impregnable in the midst of Adversity. Therefore, saith the Apostle, *I take Pleasure in Distresses for Christ's sake.* 2 Cor. 12. 10.

Secondly, In Order to our Happiness, *Wisdom* teacheth *MODERATION*, by which I understand a prudent and temperate Use of temporal Blessings, which Providence has put into our Hands, such as, Meat, Drink, Apparel, and other Accommodations of Life. And it is no small part of temporal Felicity, to have kept a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man, in those very Things. But he, that is conscious to himself of wild Extravagance and hainous Guilt, knows no such Thing as Happiness. *When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: And Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* Jam. I. 15.

FOR first, Excess and riotous Living, with idle Expence of Time, cannot be innocent, but is certainly
offen-

offensive to God, as it is a great Disorder in his Work, and a vile Abuse of his Creatures. The Abuse of Reason is a Defilement of God's Image, and reproacheth it's Maker. *Secondly*, Besides the Sinfulness of Prodigality, it wasteth many a fair Estate, and not only tends to Poverty, but is the Occasion of fraudulent Dealing. It robs both other Men, and a Man's own Family, so that *he may be worse than an Infidel*. 1 Tim. 5. 8. *Thirdly*, Intemperance is a sort of Self-Murder, and sends a Man untimely to the Grave, whole Days might have been prolonged by Moderation, in Conjunction with honouring his Parents. For it is this Part of Wisdom, *that bath length of Days in her Right Hand*. Prov. 3. 6.

BUT if Strength of Nature should hold out long against the Assaults of Intemperance, when a Man is conscious to himself of being a Sort of *Cannibal*, that has devoured Orphans, and swallowed down a Patrimony,
that

that might have kept up a flourishing Family for many Generations, and might besides have been a Relief (*in charitable Hands*) to the Poor and Needy, How can such an One find any Peace or Happiness? Therefore let us take the Apostles Rule, *Let your Moderation be known to all Men.* Phil. 4. 5.

BUT this Rule is broken on both Hands, for the Meaning is not, *That all Men should fare alike, and wear Cloaths just of the same Stuff;* but, *That every Man should use Decency, and keep up a Decorum suitable to his Quality, neither to live profusely above his Fortune, nor too niggardly below it.* For he, that hath a plentiful Estate, and cannot afford himself Conveniences proportionable, offends against Moderation, as well as he that wears Gold, and is not able to pay for it.

BUT *thirdly*, A third Thing, which Wisdom teacheth, in Order to our Happiness, is, *The Government*

ment of our Passions, if it is
 impossible for a Man to live hap-
 pily or tolerably at Ease, that on
 every slight Occasion, gives Reins
 to Rage and Fury. he may deem
 strange, That any one should be in
 Love with Strife or Contention: Or,
 that any should vex and torment
 themselves and others, when very
 little ails them, besides their own
 perverse Humours and unruly Pas-
 sions; yet such there are, and some
 of such an awkward Temper, That
 if they can but plague others, they
 are content to be uneasy themselves.
 One Man quarrels with every
 One he meets, another repines at
 his Neighbours Welfare, a third
 contends for Precedence, and thinks
 himself not respected enough;
 Hence cometh Envy, Strife, Rail-
 ling, evil surmising. And there are
 others that pretend to be affronted,
 and cannot bear it, this produces
 Contending and Bloodshed. But Wis-
 dom

dom qualifies all those Heats and Tumults, and makes the Mind sedate and calm. For what worse is any Man for being envied, despised or affronted? The best of Men have been so used, and they are still the better for bearing Injuries with Patience, and passing by Affronts with Discretion; but by revenging themselves, they usurp a Divine Right; *For Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* Rom. 12, 19.

ANGER indeed may be just, and may consist with Happiness too, so it be with Moderation. For it is necessary, that Men should be displeased with what is done amiss, and shew a proper Resentment, that Offenders may be ashamed, and made sensible of their Error; but this should be done without Bitterness, and as much as possible in the Spirit of Meekness. † *Be ye angry and sin not.* The Passions
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† Ephes. 4. 26.

are essential to Human Nature, and no Man can live without them, nay, they are of great Use, when rightly applied, *that is*, to defend Virtue and oppose Vice; and it is every Man's Duty, to regulate and govern them, in Order to his own Tranquillity. *Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* Mat.

8. 5.

THE Meek better enjoy what they have, than angry Men can enjoy great Wealth; for as the Elements of the material World are useful and necessary to the Being of Mankind, yet when enraged they become fatal, and devour all before them; so the Passions of the Soul are good in themselves, and being govern'd are a Pleasure to us, but when they are excited and inflamed beyond their due Bounds, they are most pernicious, and destructive of all Repose and Happiness.

† Plus mihi nocitura est Ira quam Injuria. Sen. de Ira, l. 3. 45.

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly. ¶ Therefore let all Bitterness and Wrath, and Anger and Clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, and all Malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. — And this is that which Wisdom teacheth, as the Way to Happiness, both Here, and Hereafter.

4thly, Wisdom teacheth **CONTENTMENT**, that is, to be contented to with our Condition, be it high or low. † I have learned, saith St. Paul, in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content. This is a noble Lesson indeed, and a great Advancement towards Happiness. Contentment implies especially two Things.

First, A free and cheerful Submission to God's Will and Pleasure.

I Grant this is no easy Let
 Secondly, **A Freedom from En-
 by and Covetousness**
 First, As for Submission to the
 Divine Will, there is the strongest
 Reason that can be. For He that
 made the World and can in a Mo-
 ment destroy it, has certainly a
 Right to govern it, and no Man can
 be so fool hardy as to dispute his
 Authority. And since the Order of
 Nature requires, That there should
 be Superiors and Inferiors, Masters
 and Servants, Rich and Poor, high-
 er, lower and middle Stations, all
 Men cannot be at the upper End of
 the World, and therefore every one
 should be content with his proper
 Station. For to repine at God's
 Dispensations, is to presume in ig-
 noraunce, to direct God, and pretend to
 be wiser than him; our Endeavours
 must accord with our Prayers, that
 the Will of God may be done in
 Earth, as it is in Heaven. Mat.
 6. 33. Good has about two

I GRANT this is no easy Lesson to those that are in Misery, and perplex'd with their Affairs; yet all Men ought to learn it for their Comfort, and often may be no Happiness without it; nor can a Man be better, but he is sure to be the worse, by fighting against God. If God hath placed us, or permitted us to fall under some Difficulty, or, which is the hardest Case, to live in Pain, he is no less a Friend to us, since these are but Trifles, in Comparison of the Recompence, which will succeed our present Suffering. Verily is to be tried here, Order to an immense Reward, and the harder any Command is, the Obedience is more valuable, and the Reward will be more glorious, so glorious a Reward, as can inspire a Man with Joy, in doing all Things, to obtain in vast a Recompence. Col. 3:12
But it is to be observed, That most of Mens Sufferings, come by their own Fault, and good Reason they

they should bear the Evils they bring upon themselves. *¶ Why doth the living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins?* Many Pains are the natural Effect of Vices, and shew the Displeasure of God against them. In this Case, *it Experience will make Men wise,* Repentance will be their Comfort; and this is God's Design in thote Evils, which he hath fixed upon several Sins, to bring them to Repentance. This is a Kind of Happiness to the Sinner, that he hath yet Room to escape eternal Damnation, and may attain to everlasting Happiness. The afflicted Sinner may rejoice at his own Repentance, *since there is Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth.* Luke 15. 7.

If we labour under any grievous Pains, not from our actual Sins but the Effects of our sinful State,

¶ as being born to Trouble, as the sparks

Sparks fly upward. This is the wise Order of Providence, to bring about what all have Need of, *Repentance for all our sins*; and this is our Comfort, That we have our Sufferings here, *and shall be delivered from the Wrath to come.* If we are in Misery, it is a Mercy we are not worse. It is a Mercy that we are yet alive and have not been cut off in our Sins, when Hell open'd its Mouth to receive us. It is a Mercy that we have Time to repent, and are called to it by Sickness. It is another Comfort, That we now submit to God's Will, and shall receive everlasting Consolation. *Let them that suffer according to the Will of God, commit their Souls to him in Well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

2dly. THE Wisdom of Contentment imports a Freedom from envying others, upon the Account of their Wealth, from coveting any Thing that is theirs, and from murmuring and complaining, that we

our life not so well provided for as
 others be. For any of these is the
 Ruine of Contentment, & without
 which there can be no Happiness.
 But it is a Happiness for a poor
 Man, to be free from tedious
 Thoughts, and the restless Gravines
 of Covetousness, with all impatient
 Complaints, and to resign his Con-
 cerns into the Hands of God. Trust
 in God, & casting all your Care
 upon him, who careth for you.
 This is what Wisdom teacheth, in
 Order to our present Happiness
 and it is a good Step towards Hap-
 piness hereafter.

But let no Man think, That
 casting our Care upon God, and
 Resignation to his Will, is any En-
 couragement to Idleness or careless
 Security. For the Neglect of our
 Calling, and necessary Duties, is
 an Error on the other Hand, and
 very sinful; for it strips God of
 his glory, and maintain us by extraordi-

ary Means. But when proper Means
and Industry have been used, and
yet the Success does not answer,
then is the Time to resign ourselves
to the Will of God, and to depend
upon his Providence. Study to be
quiet and do your own Business,
working with your own Hands,
that ye may walk honestly towards
them that are without, and that
ye may have lack of nothing. 1
Thel. 4. 11.

THERE is no Man doubts the
Lawfulness of getting or improving
an Estate, so it be by honest Means.
But let such have a Care, how they
place their Happiness in Success,
and let them not trust in uncertain
Riches, lest they be shamefully dis-
appointed. They should be ever
mindful of the Fountain of all good
Things, that they may employ his
Blessings to his Honour, and to the
Support of the Needy. Such Ver-
tue will turn to their own Advan-
tage; it will be a Comfort on the
Bed of Sickness, and the King of

Terrors shall not make them afraid. Those that are rich in this World, may be glad to do good; that they may be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life. 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

BUT there are some Men of good Sense and Understanding, that have used all possible Industry, and also Frugality for many Years, and yet are hard put to it to get Bread, what must these Men do, or where is their Happiness? It is here before us, — *Happy is he that findeth Wisdom.* † *Godliness with Contentment is great Gain.* || *A good Man shall be satisfied from himself, in his Righteous Course of Life.* If he cannot advance himself in the World, he can raise his Mind above it, and desire the little Things of this World, *Tim. 6. 6.* || *Prov. 14. 14.*

Man's Happiness.

115

according to the Gospel Precept,
*Love not the World, nor the Things
that are in the World,* having this
good Reason for it, *That if any
Man love the World, the Love of
the Father is not in him.* 1 John
2. 15.

IT is both an acceptable Obedi-
ence, and necessary Prudence, to
be indifferent towards the Things
of this World. Without this Wis-
dom, we cannot be settled in a
tolerable State. We are overjoy'd
with little Advantages, and pre-
sently overcome with Grief for
the least Disappointment. These
Evils would be prevented, if we
set a true Value upon the Things
of this World; We should much
lessen the Number and Greatness
of Misfortunes. We should then
endeavour to persuade our selves,
That there is but one real Misfor-
tune, which can befall a Man, that
is, To find himself in a Fault, or to
have any Thing to reproach him-
self with, and this should be our
Heart's

Heart's Delight, to secure the most valuable Treasure, that is, a Heavenly Inheritance; and this is what Wisdom teacheth in the next place, *To make our Calling and Election sure*, that is, to shew such Diligence and Care in our Lives and Actions, and to behave ourselves in such a Manner, as may be an Evidence to us, That we belong to Christ, † *as being conformed to his Image*. This is our Security, that we are the Children of God, and shall be received into his everlasting Kingdom. This is the only sure Inheritance, which if we endeavour for, we shall certainly obtain, and if we obtain, shall infallibly keep. A Man cannot with all his Piety secure his Estate, but that which is infinitely better, he can make his Calling and Election sure: There must be Faith in the first Place; to supply our Want of Perfection; and beside this, giving

all

all Diligence, add to your Faith
 Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance
 and all Christian Vertues. For if
 these Things be in you and abound,
 they make you, That you shall nei-
 ther be barren nor unfruitful in the
 Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. 1. 5. For true Faith cannot be un-
 active, but will produce an agree-
 able Practice, and Practice will im-
 prove our Faith. If we keep the
 Commandments, Christ will make
 us more acquainted with him; but
 we can have no Friendship with
 him, without sincere Endeavours
 to keep his Commandments.
 Christ limits his Kindness to his
 friends. And none are his
 friends, but those who keep his
 Commandments. And there needs
 no other Mark or Distinction of
 God's Elect, no other Way to make
 his Calling and Election sure. We
 need not search into God's Decrees,
 but

but keep his Commandments, and we are late. * If our Heart condemn us not; then have we Confidence towards God. Wherefore, the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; for if we do those Things you shall never fall. 2 Pet.

1. 10.

WHAT can a Man want to make him happy, who hath enough in Contentment, and Abundance in Expectation? being made an Heir according to the Hope of eternal Life. This was that which the wisest Moralists of old wanted, and wherein all their Schemes of Happiness were defective; they wanted a Saviour to rely upon, and so could have no Title to the Promises of eternal Life, of which we have a sure and stedfast Hope, by Faith in Christ Jesus, and sincere Obedience to his Gospel. || Let us therefore be sober, putting on the Breast-plate

of

of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ: And when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glorv. Col. 3. 4.

Lastly, THE Wildom of Religion directs the particular Way and Means, to make our Calling and Election sure, and to compleat our Happiness in this World, † by keeping a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man. A clamorous guilty Conscience is an intollerable Evil. A wounded Spirit who can bear? But there is as much Happiness in a good Conscience, as there is Misery in a bad one. A good Conscience is a continual Feast; a perpetual Solace to the Mind, and meets one with substantial Pleasure at every Turn. It rewards the industrious Search with

† Acts 24: 16.

solid *Happiness*, and all other Acts of Wisdom tend to this Point: A vigorous and pleasant Influence fills the religious Soul, upon a firm Expectation of future Glory. Peace of Mind is one Heaven in Possession, and hath another in Reserve, *because God hath called us to his eternal Glory by Jesus Christ.* 2 Pet 5: 10.

CONSCIENCE is Reason considering and judging of a Man's Actions, and according to the Use of Reason, such will be the Conscience, sagacious or careless. There must be diligent Enquiry, to establish a sound Conscience, that will judge impartially. All Vertues must join to form a good Conscience, and every Vertue contributes to our *Happiness*.—It is only an uniform pious Life, that draws Comfort from the Conscience, and that is a certain Pleasure, which is neither liable to Accident, nor exposed to Injury; but there are still new Delights in the Survey of a pious Life, and *this is our rejoicing, the Testimo-*

Man's Happiness.

Ques

My first good Conscience, that is
Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not
in fleshly wisdoms, but by the Grace
of God, we have had our Conver-
sation in the World 12. Cor. 1.

12. Cor. 1. Mind is one Heaven in Possession

These Happinesses of Man in the
lotus State consists in being like
God, and so it doth in the present
Life, in being as like him as we can,
in the highest Degree of Perfection,
that our present Capacity will ad-
mit; and when we speak of Hap-
piness, whether consisting in Wis-
dom or Holiness, or Peace of Mind,
supported by the Faith of Christ,
or in the Righteousness of Faith,
these are but different Expressions
of the same Thing; or if distinctly
considered, their Actions depend
one upon another, and may be com-
prehended in having a Conscience,
which lays hold upon the Mercy
of the Gospel, and answers the Chris-
tian Covenant. For Baptism doth
save us by the Resurrection of Christ,

Remember me it not

not through the external Washing
of the Body, but upon the Answer
of a good Conscience. 1 Pet. 3.
21.

THE Gospel gives Relief to the
Conscience, which would be dis-
tressed in itself; because it much
abates the Severity of the Law, and
accepts of imperfect Righteousness.
But it doth not accept of a wicked
Life, and great Neglect of God's
Service. We must walk according
to the Tenour of the Gospel, in sin-
cere Endeavours to be Holy, which
God accepts for perfect Righteous-
ness. We must have Faith in Christ,
and Works agreeable to that Faith.
True Faith tormeth a good Consci-
ence, Conscience purifieth the in-
ner Man, Purity of Mind giveth
Peace. † For the End of the Com-
mandment is Charity, out of a pure
Heart, and of a good Conscience,
and of Faith unfeigned. It is by
Vertue of Christ's Sacrifice, That
we are sanctified into the
obedience of the Father.

our Hearts are sprinkled from an
evil Conscience. Heb. 10, 22.

THE Conscience so qualified,
is Happiness to all Conditions
of Men. It is the poor Man's
comfort to have a clear Conscience,
tho' he wants those Advantages,
which others mistake for Happi-
ness. There is a great Delight in
a just Sense of having done good
in our Generation, and fairly acquit-
ted ourselves, in whatsoever Trust
and Capacity we have been concer-
ned. A vast Pleasure ariseth to the
Soul, as being in Favour with the
Almighty. There is every Day a
fresh Spring of Joy, as we are
careful to maintain good Works,
and to lay up Treasures in Hea-
ven. Works of Charity please our
Heavenly Father, because we imi-
tate his Goodness, and are Assistants
to his Providence, in relieving his
poor Creatures. *He, that hath
pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the
Lord,*

Lord, and that which he hath given, will he repay him again. Prov. 19. 17.

BUT as all our Works are imperfect, and we are guilty of many Sins, † there is Death in our Nature, and we cannot merit eternal Life. Therefore Faith in the Son of God compleats the Christian, and makes us accepted in the Beloved. This is a great Happiness to Sinners, that a quiet Conscience is attainable, in this dangerous State of Sin; and notwithstanding our natural Incapacity, a good Conscience built upon the Faith of Christ, secures to us the heavenly Life, ‡ because the Son of God hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and by his Stripes we are healed. This is a delightful Health to the Spirit, to be healed of those mortal Wounds which Sin hath made in our Souls,

and

† 2 Cor. 1. 9. || Ephes. 1. 6. ‡ Rev. 1. 5. * 1 Pet. 2. 24.

and to have our Conscience purged
from dead Works to serve the Liv-
ing God. Heb. 9. 14.

WE are by Nature dead in Sin,
having no Principle of Spiritual
Life, nor any Sense of our wretch-
ed State. † But we are quick-
ened together with Christ, and re-
newed in some Degree unto Holy
Life. || Yet still Sin dwells in us,
and many Sins are secret to us; we
know not how often we offend: *
Who knoweth how oft he offend-
eth? O cleanse thou me from my
Secret Faults! It is happy for poor
Mortals, that God can acquit Sin,
and yet be just in his Judgment; ‡
He is faithful and just to forgive us
our Sins, and to cleanse us from
all Unrighteousness; because the
Blood of Christ cleanseth us from
all Sin. ¶ Yea, he hath adopted us
his Children, and we have received
the Spirit of Adoption, whereby
we

† Col. 2. 13. || Rom. 7. 17. * Psal.
51. 12. ‡ 1. John 1. 7, 9.

we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit of God beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God. Rom. 8. 13, 14.

BUT we must not expect Indulgence, in any Neglect of Duty, because we are strictly commanded and enabled to obey the Gospel. Every Child of God is endued with Power; and Adoption supposes the Use of that Power; because God would not adopt ungodly Persons. We are Children of God by Creation, alienated from him by Sin, and received again into his Family by Baptism; yet so as we may be cast off again, if we be disobedient. But Adoption is confirmed to us, and we appear to be Sons of God, if we be Followers of God, as dear Children, according to the Terms of the Gospel; then are we Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. Rom. 8. 15.

WE suffer with Christ, when we follow the Example of his Patience, in bearing all hard Events; and and this is your strong Consolation, † The Hope of the Glory of God. The Christian Hope provides against all the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life, and the more we suffer here, the stronger is our Hope of the World to come, having the Testimony of a good Conscience. Keep Innocency, and do the Thing that is right, and that will bring a Man Peace at the last: But it must always be remembered, That Faith is the Perfection of a good Conscience, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. It is by holding Faith and a good Conscience, That we enjoy the blessed Hope. This is the best Happiness in this World, which supports a Man under all Evils of this sinful State, *and causeth him to rejoice evermore.* 1 Thess. 5. 16.

But still Obedience is our Will-
dom, without which we cannot be perfect
happy. The Case of *Adam* shews
That Obedience to the Will of God
is the Means of Happiness, and Dis-
obedience the Cause of Misery, for
much Evil hath one Sin brought
into the World. By Sin Death reign-
eth. The written Law requires per-
fect Obedience, being a Copy of the
true Original Law of Nature; but
seeing we cannot be perfect, we have
Christ's Obedience, to compleat
our imperfect Obedience; we
plainly see by so many Precepts
that Obedience is absolutely neces-
sary, and that Christ's Sacrifice was
only intended for those, who lived
orderly in the World, who should
be made perfect by Faith. By one
Man's Disobedience many were
made Sinners; and by the Obedi-
ence of one shall many be made
Righteous. Rom. 5, 19.

Thus we gain more by the
second *Adam*, than we lost by the
first.

Wif first. The Soul under the Pro-
tection of a Redeemer, hath a Prof-
pect of eternal Bliss, and a more
clear Understanding, which the
Gentiles could not attain. Reason
suggested to them a future State,
without not a true Knowledge of it.
We have a certain Revelation, †
and a full Assurance of Understand-
ing, instead of groundless Poetical
fancies. This Prospect extinguish-
eth both the Fear and Envy of Hu-
man Greatness. It lightens the
burden of any present Evil, and re-
fresheth us with pleasant Meditati-
ons, under the hardest Circumstan-
ces of Mortality. It is one of the
hardest Cases, to fall from Plenty
into want; it is worse than to be
born poor, and yet a Man may be
happier than he was before, if he
hopes with Lazarus to be conduct-
ed by Angels into Heaven. Luke

16. 22.

the
the
first

† Col. 2. 2.

It is a natural Homage of Man, to trust in the infinite Being, and it is a present Happiness, to be under the Care of Omnipotence. It is a Kindness of God to command us to trust in him, whilst we labour under the Weight of Sin; we had been miserable, if he had forbid it. The Commandment imports a Blessing, and the Duty administers Comfort, especially in the Hour of Death. When the Soul is entering upon another State, to meet with strange Objects, and to see God in Majesty, it will be seized with trembling Thoughts, under which nothing could support it, but trusting in him, who gave it Being. He that gave Life, can preserve it, and add to it a greater Ability. *He holdeth our souls in Life, and they that trust in him, shall not be destitute.* *Psal. 68. 9. 28. 9.*

WE are obliged to the Scriptures, that our Reasoning is improved, and that our Thoughts can be composed: But Sin again distracts our Thoughts,

Thoughts, and obstructs our Reasoning. The Knowledge of Sin discourages our Hope, and would even drive us to despair, when we see the Horror of Sin, which inflames the Wrath of God. But the Son of God comes to our Relief, and turns our Fear into Joy. His Knowledge keeps Pace with the Knowledge of Sin, and turns our Doubt into Confidence. We have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of Him. The Jews knew Christ in Part; but the Gentiles were without him, being alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, having no Hope, and without God in the World, but through Christ we both have Access by one Spirit, unto the Father. Eph.

2. 12.

It is very remarkable, what our Lord saith, There is no Man that hath left House, or Parents, or Brethren, or, Wife or Children for the Kingdom of God's Sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this

this present Time, and in the World to come *Life everlasting*. Even in this present World, he shall receive manifold more, not in Kind, but in Value. He must not expect Houses or Lands, but what is infinitely better, the Comfort of *Divine Favour*. Whosoever is in Trouble, he may very well make a Virtue of Necessity, when so great an Advantage attends it. He that acquiesceth in the Will of God, may live like the great Apostle, as having nothing, yet possessing all Things in the Friendship of God. *He hath his Fruit in to Holiness, and the End everlasting Life.* Rom. 6. 22.

THIS glorious Prospect is a perpetual Happiness, which is here begun, and shall never have an End. He, that liveth and believeth in the Son of God, shall never die. The short Article of Death is Nothing, it doth not interrupt the happy Life. The Pains are soon at an End, and succeeded with endless Pleasure. Death is only a Sleep to the Faith.

Faithful, and in a Moment ariseth a Light, which leads to perfect Happiness; Poverty, Pain and Dark-
nels fly before it, and Death is swal-
low'd up in Victory. The Soul, that
hath a lively Sense of Futurity, can
cheerfully look Death in the Face,
and what Nature most abhors, Can
desire to be dissolved, that it may
be with Christ. Phil. I. 2, 3.

HOWEVER we are to depart
hence, Religion smoothes the Way
into the other World. We know,
that all our Pains are Chastisements
for Sin, and must be well taken
from the Hand of God. Now, no
Chastning for the present seemeth
to be joyous, but rather grievous;
nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth
the peaceable Fruits of Righteou-
ness. For which Cause we faint
not, but tho' our outward Man pe-
rish, yet the inward Man is re-
newed Day by Day. When the
Body stricken with Diseases, it is
sometimes strangely supported from
within, and the Man lives upon
the

the Vigour of his Spirit. Pleasant Reflections soften the Distempers of Age, and makes him slide more gently into the Grave. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, believing in the Son of God, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life. Rev. 22. 14.

We are exceedingly happy, in the Belief of the Truth, whereunto ye are called by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He that hath this Hope, can never fail of Happiness, and nothing in this World is comparable to it. For what can a Man want to make him happy, who hath Peace of Mind in Possession, and a Crown of Glory in Reversion? A good Conscience is his highest Honour, the Sum of all his Riches, and the height of all his Pleasures; and all the Enjoyments of this World are nothing in Comparison of the comfortable Assurance

ance of eternal Glary. This is the Happiness attained by Wisdom, and this Wisdom is approved by that Happiness. For Wisdom is justified of her Children. Mat. 11. 19.

BUT there seems to be an Objection against this Notion of Happiness, as also against the Apostle's Precept, which is founded upon it, *That we should rejoice in the Lord always.* This Precept seems to be impracticable, and that Notion contradicted by common Experience. For what Man is there upon Earth so happy, as that he can be always joytul? Or how is it possible in a Vale of Tears, in an Ocean of Troubles, and in a World of Misery, *to rejoice always?* King David was so far from it, That he had Sorrow in his Heart daily; and the Apostle himself, who commands continual rejoycing, confesseth great Heaviness and continual Sorrow in his Heart, *inasmuch*

that he could wish to be accused from Christ, upon the Account of his obdurate Brethren and Kinsmen according to the Flesh. Rom 9. 3.

THERE are many Occasions of Tears and Lamentation in this miserable Life, and the Causes of Sorrow many Times overwhelm those of Joy, and many Men are so far from rejoicing always, that they can seldom find a Time to rejoice at all. Solomon's Time to weep and mourn is always ready, but his Time to laugh comes very rarely. Our blessed Saviour, the great Exemplar and Pattern for our Imitation, was a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief; and it must be own'd, That all our Comforts are checker'd with Crosses. For all Things here below are so temper'd and allay'd, that there is nothing pure and unmixt, but even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, and many Times there is no rest in our Bones by Reason of our Sins. Psal 38. 3:

BUT

BUT for all this, an Accommodation may be made between Joy and Sorrow, between Trouble and Triumph, and we may learn to rejoice always. For in the midst of Affliction there are Causes of Joy, and there is Comfort in Adversity. There are War and Peace at the same Time, within the narrow Compass of Man's Heart, Peace with Conscience, War with Satan, and with our own irregular Desires. † My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever. *In me faith our Saviour, ye shall have Peace, but in the World Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* John 16. 13.

WE may then be happy by God's Help, and obey the Apostle's Precept, of which he shews the great Importance, by repeating it over again in the same Words, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Re-
T *joice.*

† Psal. 73. 26.

joice. As if he should say, you may think it strange, That when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth for the Gospel's Sake, or whatsoever your Circumstances be, that I should bid you rejoyce; yet be assured, do it upon good Grounds, and therefore I lay again, *Rejoyce always*, and this is no more than what our Saviour hath commanded, with sufficient Encouragement to practice it. *Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile and persecute you for my sake; rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.* Mat. 5. 17.

So that altho' there are a thousand Causes of Grief, and tho' we walk in the Valley and Shadow of Death; † yet the Word of God doth quicken us. And tho' we have many Enemies, yet there is still Matter of rejoicing, because the Almighty is our Friend. * The Lord loveth the Righteous. There is

† Psal. 119. 58. * Psal. 146. 8.

Man's Happiness

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much Comfort in the Practice of Christianity, and so great are the Rewards annexed to it, That a good Man never wants Matter of Joy and Gladness. † For the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed, and therefore our rejoicing ought to bear Proportion, not to our light afflictions, but to our great Expectations, The Fulness of Joy prepared for us in the heavenly Life. Psalm. 15. 11.

WE are to consider further, that God hath Compassion on us, as a Father pitieth his own Children, and, as a Father, corrects us, to restrain our Wandering from the Path of his Commandments, and to bring us to himself by the working of his Grace. His Corrections are Matter of rejoicing, as being intended for our Good, and in Order to our salvation. They are Tokens of
our

our being Children of God. For, saith the Apostle, *if ye be without Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Bastards and not Sons.* Our Sins at the best are very many, and if it were not for God's Fatherly Corrections, they would be many more. But whatever it is that prevents Sin, and promotes eternal *Happiness*, we ought to look upon it as a Blessing, and therefore have Cause to rejoice in all our Tribulation. 2 Cor. 7. 4.

LET no Man then repine at those light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, since by a merciful and Divine Hand, they are caused to work together for our good. If we consider the Goodness of our Heavenly Father, and the Greatness of our Reward, we may well rejoice in him always, except when we offend so much Goodness, and are in Danger of

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losing so great a Reward. And then again, if we learn Humility, and improve our Repentance, we turn Evil into a greater Good, and the more we can sorrow for our Sins, the more we shall rejoice in the Lord. Happy is the Man that findeth this Wisdom.

BUT we are not to suppose, that we can make our selves happy, either in this World or the World to come, by our own Wisdom or Virtue. We have not in our selves a Capacity for those Attainments, no more than we can save Life or raise our selves from the Dead. But God is with us in all our Ways, and we must thankfully own our Obligations to him; † *acknowledge God in all thy Ways, and he will direct thy Paths.* The Son of God hath done the great Work for us. All our Works bear no Proportion to eternal Happiness, not so much as a drop of Water to the Ocean; and

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and Sin is an infinite Evil, because it breaks the Order of God's Creation, contradicts his Sovereign Will, and offendeth infinite Majesty.

THEREFORE a Sacrifice of infinite Value was necessary, to provide for the Honour of God; and it is very well we can be saved, upon all the Terms of the *New Covenant*. Christ hath paid the full Price of our Redemption, and yet our own Endeavours must not be wanting, towards Purity of Heart and a good Life. We must work out our own Salvation, and those that labour most of all, have still need of the more effectual Work of the Son of God. The best of Men are unprofitable Servants, and cannot merit Reward at the Hand of God; *but eternal Life is his Gift*; Thanks be to God for his unpeakable gift, and let us give Thanks always for all Things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 5. 20.

TO apply the *Whole*. ALL Men desire to be happy. But do you seek for Happiness where it may be found, or you seek it in uncertain & perishable Things? Spiritual WILDOM is that alone which can give it. If any say he hath found it, and thinks himself happy, it is very well, I shall not go about to question it: But let every one take Heed, that his Wildom is not Presumption, and his Happiness imaginary; for this vanisheth as a Vapour, and the other turns into Folly. There have been some, that boasted of their Riches, and counted themselves happy, as the Psalmist observes, but what was the End of that Happiness? They shall go to the Generation of their Fathers, and shall never see Light, that is, as Dr. Hammond paraphrases upon the Place, they shall be destroyed forever, and pass into endless Darkness and Misery. *Plal. 49. 10.*

LET all take Heed of such fatal Happiness, and let us beware of that deceitful Wisdom, which is Foolishness with God; but let us remember the Dictates of true Wisdom, in Order to a firm and lasting Happiness, the Sum of which is this, *Consideration, Moderation, Government of the Passions, Contentment, Submission to the Divine Will, Freedom from Envy, and Covetousness, from Murmuring and Discontent, a Love of Innocency and Honesty, with a constant Endeavour to preserve Peace of Conscience, and Hope of Salvation.* These good Works being sanctified and perfected by Faith, produce Happiness in this unhappy State, a pleasant Relish and Satisfaction of Mind, in the Sense of having done our Duty, and in Repentance according to our Failings. This is briefly that Wisdom, which he that findeth shall be happy, and yet more briefly, *It is the Wisdom of being sincerely pious and Religious.*

Now

Now we may observe the goodness of God towards all Men, tho' we be Sinners against him, and dishonour him by our Sins; we see how all Men may be happy, tho' there is great Difference in Men's Conditions, and divers Opinions about Happiness. Some Men have much less to complain of than others, and what is Happiness to one Man, is Misery to another; some take a Pleasure in getting Wealth, tho' they do wrong to obtain their End. This is the most unhappy State, to do wrong for the Sake of Eating and Drinking; he is more happy, that with Honesty lives upon Bread and Water: He is the most happy, that findeth the most Wisdom, and hath so regulated his Mind thereby, *that he can rejoice in the Lord always.*

THERE are many good Men (we hope) that have a great Share in the Blessings and Comforts of this Life. The good Word of God directs them, what they are to be-
U
joice

ioice in, not that they are rich or
learned, honourable or powerful
for these, tho' great Blessings in the
Hands of good Men, yet being slip-
pery and uncertain, they are not to
be at all rely'd on; and being very
deficient in themselves, they cannot
afford any solid Happiness: but
they that are rich in this World,
should be glad to distribute, and re-
joice in the Lord their great Bene-
factor, the Spring and Fountain of
all temporal good Things, and from
whom they may hope for a better
Inheritance among the Saints in
Light. Col. I. 12.

THESE are, I doubt more than
a few, who possess the good Gifts
of God in great Plenty, and there-
in rejoice over much, but seldom
look up to the Fountain Head, to
send thither their Praile and Grati-
tude. Too many there are, that e-
ven prefer this World, before the
Maker of it; *this is abominable*
Idolatry, and the other a great Ne-
glect, which the Word of God
teach-

teacheth to avoid, and directs us to true Happiness. If any Man persists in a wrong Course, and cannot find Happiness in Religion, nor rejoice in the supreme Good, there is a Distemper in the Heart, which like a sick Palate, cannot relish the most pleasant Food.—I shall therefore add as it were a Medicine, to correct the vicious Humour, by shewing, That the same Wisdom, which is Happiness in this Life, is the Means to attain eternal Happiness, *Like unto Jacob's Ladder, which was set upon the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven, the Angels of God ascending and descending on it.* Gen. 28, 12.

It is a Work very agreeable to the Wisdom and goodness of God, to give grace for grace, that is, if Men use well their natural gifts, they will obtain a supernatural gift, to enable them to do better; and

and if they choole the best Happi-
ness in this World, they shall ob-
tain a much better afterwards.
There is a strict Connexion be-
tween the present and future Hap-
piness, and the One leads unto the
Other. The Kingdom of *Glory* is sure
to succeed the Kingdom of *Grace*; for
they are of the same Kind in differ-
ent Degrees. It is the same State
in this World, which is to be im-
proved here, and made perfect in
the World to come, a State of Ho-
liness, unto which Happiness is u-
nited. Therefore, the very same
Means, which make us happy here
in some Degree, will make us
completely happy in Heaven. For
Godliness is profitable to all Things
having the Promise of this Life,
and that which is to come. 1 Tim.
4. 8.

THE same Manner of Life,
which secures a good Conscience,
doth make our Calling and Election

sure. || *The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace*, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever. *Great Peace have they that love the Law of God*, and they are the Sons of Peace, who upon good Grounds have a quiet Conscience. Those that are at Peace in their own Minds, bring forth the † *Fruits of the Spirit*, which are *Joy and Peace*, and these are *Evidences of our being Children of God, ordained unto eternal Life*. For he is the God of Peace. So that Duty and Interest are join'd together, and we may be happy for ever, if we will be happy in this World. If thou wilt enter into Life, saith our Saviour, *Keep the Commandments*. Mat. 19. 17.

BUT we must not suppose neither, That our Works are the Causes of Salvation. Eternal Life is the Gift of God, and our Vertue is only the Qualification, for receiving that

That inestimable Gift. We are indebted to God for the present Life, and we owe a Duty to him in full Perfection, according to the Law of our original Nature; but so we are not able to keep the Commandments. Therefore we must apply to the Law of Faith, and have a good Conscience according to that Law. We must use sincere Endeavours to keep the Commandments, and yet not depend upon our Works, but upon the more precious Faith of the Son of God; knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, That we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law; for by the Works of the Law, shall no Flesh be justified. Gal. 2. 26.

Our Work is very imperfect, and we cannot be free from Sin, to which God is an eternal Enemy, but being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord

Jesus Christ. Our Sins being washed away with the Blood of the Lamb, and our Works sanctified by his Righteousness, we have our Names written in the Book of Life. But the Benefit of his Sacrifice is only assured to those that keep his Commandments. *¶ To them that hear his Voice, he giveth Eternal Life.* Therefore St. Paul joins together Faith and a good Conscience, which some having put away, concerning Faith have made Shipwreck. *1 Tim. i. 19.*

FOR Faith without Works is dead, and cannot preserve Life; but *the Just shall live by Faith.* Faith directs their Course of Life, obligeth them first to be righteous, and then perfects their Righteousness. Those Men have the Benefit of Faith, who are thereby engaged to be righteous, *† and the Righteous shall go away into eternal Life.* These are ordained to Life, and are kept

kept by the Power of God unto Salvation. || The Promises of Life are first made to a Believer, and next to the Righteous, as he is a Believer, † who is conformed to the Image of the Son of God. — I am crucified with Christ, saith St. Paul, yet not I, but Christ lieth in me, and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Gal. 2. 20.

If Men could be saved by their own Righteousness, Christ's Sacrifice had not been necessary, and if we believe not in this Sacrifice, we frustrate the grace of God: || for if Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. † But Christ is the Author of Salvation to them that obey him. Obedience obtains the Benefit of Faith, and Faith is approved by Obedience. He,

† Rom. 8. 29. || Gal. 2. 21. † Heb. 5. 9.

He, that believeth on the Son,
hath Everlasting Life. † Because
Christ is the Son of God by Nature,
and they are united in every Divine
Work, He that heareth my Word
and believeth on him that sent me,
hath everlasting Life, and shall not
come into Condemnation, but is pas-
sed from Death to Life, Jo. 5. 24.

THE great Commandment of the
Gospel is Faith; but that must be uni-
ted with good Works, to bring us to
everlasting Life; because God must
be honoured by our Obedience. *
Blessed are they that do his Com-
mandments, that they may have right
to the Tree of Life, and may enter
in through the Gates into the City.
Christ is the Tree of Life, who re-
pairs the Loss sustained by the Tree
of Death and nourisheth the Soul to
Eternity. || When Christ who is our
Life shall appear, then shall we also
appear with him in Glory, ‡ Fellow

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† John 3. 36. * Rev. 22. 14. || Col.
3. 4. ‡ Eph. 2. 19. † Gal. 4:8.

Citizens with the Saints. || Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Yea, *there is a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give to all them that love his Appearing.* 2 Tim. 4. 8.

OUR own Reason will conduce us, both to Happiness in this World and that which is to come. Altho' our Reason is not sufficient of it self yet it will lead us to the End proposed to the Happiness intended for us. A competent Knowledge begets Holiness, by a Divine Blessing upon our labours, and that is possible for every Man to attain, that makes right use of his Reason. The Knowledge and right apprehensions of the Nature and Reason of things is Right Reason; and the Government of our Wills and Faculties by Right Reason is Holiness. Holiness is the Wisdom of Religion, and that is the true Happiness in this Life.

which is the Beginning of *Eternal Happiness.*

THIS is the highest Perfection, that a Man can arrive at in this World, the most perfect Exercise of Human Reason, assisted and improved by the Grace of God. *This is his greatest Wisdom and the Means of Happiness.* He is the wisest Man that most honours his Maker, and it is the best Exercise of Wisdom, to use to the best advantage that Excellency, which distinguisheth Man from other parts of the Creation, and renders him more capable to honour God; and being thus employed, God is so pleased with Man's Endeavours, He will not let him want what is necessary, to guide his Feet unto the way of Peace. *God shall supply all your need, according to his Riches in Glory, by Christ Jesus. Phil. 4. 19.*

IF we endeavour after Honours, Christ will bring it to Perfection, and

and it will be our chief Happiness. Holiness makes Men as happy, as the present State will admit, and suitable to each Man's Condition. It is comfortable to poor Men, and the best support in any distrest. It is not the fault of Religion, if we are not more happy. Our yet remaining Sins and many infirmities still retain our troubles. We should have less uneasiness, in proportion to our Holiness. Because Holiness naturally tends to Happiness, and is amiable in the Sight of God. *The righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Countenance doth behold the upright. Holiness becometh his House for ever.* Psal. 11, 7. 93, 5.

WE should therefore exercise and improve our Faith in the Son of God. Faith will improve our Vertue, and enable it to resist the tempting profits and pleasures of the World. He that hath a true Notion of the Joys of Heaven, will never resign his Interest there, nor take all the Kingdoms of this World for

an equivalent. But it must be a well settled Faith, which cannot be removed, and is able to remove Mountains, that is, all Difficulties. If we know the Substance of things not seen, and the meaning of Substantial Virtue, we should never please our selves so much with Shadows of Delight; but seek after that real Happiness, *wherewith we shall receive the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls.* 1. Pet.

1. 9. 4. We must expect to take some pains for such an exceeding weight of Glory. † Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the *Crown of Life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. * But let no Man deceive you, he, that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as He is righteous. If you know these things, happy are ye, if you do them.

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‡ Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an Entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *with whom you will also reign for ever, and every one receive a Crown of Glory*, 1. Pet. 5, 4. Rev. 22, 5.

BUT let us remember, that without God's Help we cannot attain to the Heavenly Kingdom, and therefore let us pray unto him fervently, that we may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding. ¶ And let us always give thanks unto the Father, who hath delivered us from the Power of Darknels and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, and made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. *Now*

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unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us, unto him be Glory in the Church by Jesus Christ, throughout all Ages, World without end, Amen, Eph. 3: 20. 21.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to thy humble Servants, that by thy holy Inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

The Happiness of the future State.

I Have shewed the Happiness of this present Life, *that is,* the best that the present State will admit of, according to every Man's Condition in the World. It is not peculiar to rich Men, but what every Man may attain; it is the poor Man's Happiness, and the rich Man's Felicity; it consists in *Peace of Mind*, that is procured by religious *Wisdom*. It hath a Connexion with the Future

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ture State, so that to make our selves happy here, is the way to be vastly more happy in the World to come.

Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom.

I would say something of the Future State ; but expect not a Description of Heavenly Glory; that is too great a Task for the most learned, and beyond the reach of the finest Eloquence. For it is yet within the Veil, and it doth not now appear what we shall be: It would be a bold attempt to describe Heaven, when the Scripture it self, the Revelation from Heaven, represents it only by negatives, because it is too great for Human Capacity, and so far beyond the Tongues of Men and Angels, that no Language can express it, nor any Mind conceive it: For Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man the Things, which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

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BUT the Scripture hath discovered so much in general concerning a Future State, as is largely sufficient to persuade Men to look after it; and this is the good Design of Providence, to assist us with some Divine Instructions, because we are to pass a Trial in this World, in Order to a perfect happy State in the World to come. The Happiness appears so far, and with as much Certainty, as may be a sufficient Reason of the Hope that is in us, and may quicken our Endeavours to obtain it. The Evidence is as clear as the Thing will admit, till we put off this mortal Nature, and can be capable of seeing the Kingdom of God. *In the mean Time we walk by Faith, and not by Sight.* 2 Cor. 5. 7.

THE Duty of Faith is required, to make Men capable of Reward, being attended with Difficulty; because the Kingdom of God is very mysterious. There is a Trust in the goodness of God, that he will

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preserve good Men; but seeing all are Sinners, and not capable of Heavenly Glory, there is a Trust in the Merit of the Son of God, that we shall be made fit for the Heavenly Kingdom; and there is a Trust in the Holy Ghost, that he will help us to believe. For there is an Aversion in sinful Nature to believe Divine Truths; therefore, Faith is a Gift; || it is given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; and no Man can say with a right Faith, *That Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* 1 Cor: 13. 3

CHRIST being the Son of God, and one with the Father in Nature, we have need of great assistance to believe it; we could not possibly attain of our selves; Yet such is the Nature of Faith, we must endeavour for it; it is partly our own Acquisition, and we learn it by the use of the Holy Scriptures. † For Faith

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word preached. The Gift is conveyed to us in the Use of means, with exercising our thoughts upon it. There is a Mixture of Grace with Man's Endeavours, *and the Ministers of Christ are Workers together with him, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.* 2. Cor. 6, 1.

HERE Grace signifies the Doctrine of the Gospel, for the Word is used for any Gift or Favour bestowed upon Men; but there is a special gift in the Heart, which teacheth effectually to receive that Doctrine. || Our sufficiency is of God. By this Means we learn to believe those Mysteries, which are above our Understanding, yet must be believed upon God's Word. Faith is then acceptable, when it is stedfast against some difficulties, † and is the Evidence of things not seen. But Truth is made so evident

as may incline a wise Man to believe it, and yet to remote, as may shew our dependence upon God, and make us pray, *Lord help my Unbelief.* Mark. 9. 29.

BUT what will become of those Men, who have not the Word preached to them, yet are supposed to be good Moral Men? This is a curious Matter, which we are not concern'd to know, and must be referred to God's good Pleasure. But this is certain, no Man is good enough for Heaven; and if any moral Men are saved, as we hope, it must be through the Son of God. In his Father's House are many Mansions, perhaps some for those Unbelievers, who had not the Means of Faith, or were less to blame for want of it. *Cornelius* the *Gentile* could not be saved by his works, but they were his recommendation to Divine Favour, and he is led by a Miracle to the *saving Faith.* Act. 10, 3.

MEN might hope for some Favour from the Divine Goodness and

and the first Step of Faith leads to a higher ; but we find no other way but by the Son of God. † There is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved. Every Degree of this Faith advanceth the Soul in Heaven. But every Man's case will be considered, and no Man will be thought to have had hard measure: There are divers Degrees of Happiness, according to Mens Qualifications, || as one Star differeth from another Star in glory. But they will surely be in a worse case than the Gentiles, who despise the Gospel Advantages, *and the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* Ephel. 3. 8.

THEREFORE let us study the Increase of Faith, and thereby engage our Minds in all Duty, † *For without Faith it is impossible to please God.* Let us then pursue the Method of Holy Scripture,

† Acts 4. 12. || 1 Cor. 15. † Heb 11. 6.

by considering the Future State, and comparing it with Things that are seen, that we may perswade ourselves more earnestly to seek after the Things that are not seen, but vastly more worthy of our Pains. For it is our great Concern, to give every thing it's just Value, and to make our choise in Righteousness ; that we may not unjustly prefer this World, before the Heavenly Kingdom, *But may set our affections on things above, not on things on the Earth.* Col. 3, 2.

Now when God causeth his Sun that most glorious Creature, to shine upon the unjust, how much greater glory remains to the righteous, and the believers in Jesus Christ ! If those that hate him enjoy his Bounty, how much better things hath he prepared for them that love him ? Whatsoever we can imagine in this World must needs be vastly short of heavenly glory, as Heaven is higher than the Earth. The first Heaven where God makes the Clouds

Clouds his Chariot, is farther beneath the second in glory than it is in height ; yet the second is not so far above the first, as it is below the third Heaven, *where St. Paul was caught, and heard unspeakable Words.* 2 Cor. 12, 4.

BUT we may consider with admiration, when the Sun and Moon and innumerable Lights, take up an immense space and are only outward Ornaments of Heaven, how glorious is the Court within, and the presence of Infinite Majesty ! At the very Entrance of Heaven, the happy Soul will be surpriz'd and amazed at its own Happiness, and will have cause to say among the Saints, not half of the least part of the lowest degree hath been told him. Revelation it self could not express it, nor represent it to our weak understanding. But then, the Soul hath all its Faculties enlarged, to receive the Heavenly Felicity. *Then we shall not only see God, but we shall be like him, and shall know,*

even

even as also we are known. 1 Cor. 13, 12.

THE Soul will be exalted to the utmost Perfection, in proportion to its Holiness. For there will be different Capacities, according to the different Degrees of Glory bestowed on the Vessels of Mercy; some hold more then others, but they shall all be filled, and every Soul, according to its enlarged Capacity, shall be delighted for ever. We shall have nothing more to wish for, nor fear of falling any more; but having stood a Tryal here, we shall be secure in the Heavenly Paradise. This Life is a wandering Progress of Desire; but Heaven is a sure Settlement, and quenches all our wishes in a Sea of Enjoyment. *Blessed are they that Hunger now, for they shall be filled.* Lu. 6, 21.

EVERY Passion of the Soul shall be set right by an unalterable Regulation. There will be no Grief nor Hatred, no Desire nor Fear, but

but we shall be inspired with sacred Love, and pass from Joy to Joy in Endless Circles of Felicity. This Happiness will never be at a stand, but still improving to all Eternity. For both Angels and Men being Finite, and God being Infinite, the Causes of their Happiness will still be augmented, their Knowledge and Love will ever increase, and their Capacity will be more enlarged, and fresh Streams of Delight are ever flowing from an inexhaustable Deity. *In his Presence is Fullness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* Psal. 16. 11.

THE Infinite Power and goodness of God will ever send forth new Objects of Delight and fresh subjects of Praise and Admiration of our Happiness, and Love of the Author of so great Salvation. So vast a Change shall be wrought in us, as will afford most Pleasant Reflections, and a future Prospect of Glory in the Beauty of Holiness. The Will shall be perfected with

absolute Holiness, exact conformity to the Will of God, and perfect Liberty from all servitude of Sin. We shall still be more pleased in Heaven, that we have escaped the pains of Hell ; and there will be ever a glorious Triumph, *because Death is swallowed up in Victory.* 1 Cor, 15, 54.

THE Soul will receive increase of Joy, when it's Body shall be restored, and changed into a Spiritual Body; † for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, || and delivered from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. We shall be more delighted with a clearer Sight and more perfect Knowledge of the most perfect Being. We shall be let into the secret Decrees of Heaven, and the deep Mysteries of our Redemption, we shall enjoy the Society of blessed Saints, and join with them in
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† 1 Cor. 1. 52. || Rom. 3. 21

cheerful Expressions of Gratitude to our Redeemer, *who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* Phil. 3, 21.

THE State of Heaven is great beyond Comparison, and happy beyond Expression. There is Perfection of Comfort, and all Enjoyments in Perfection, without the least ungrateful Mixture; *Riches and Treasures that wax not old; the Honour of Saints in Glory, and the Power of Kings upon Thrones, without the reach of Envy, or any Fear of losing their Authority.* There is the perfect Knowledge of all God's Works, and the wise Designs of his Providence, which were too hard for the wisest Men. There is the Beatifick Vision, or the clear Sight and Knowledge, Favour and Enjoyment of God, in ineffable glory, which will exercise the active Soul, and enlarge

large it's Delight in boundless Per-
fections to all *Eternity*.

THE *Eternity* of the *Future State* is a mighty Addition to it's Excellency, beyond all that we see in this World. † *For the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things which are not seen are eternal.* The Heavenly Happiness, tho' unconceivably great, without *Eternity* would be very imperfect. It would strangely damp our Joys to think, That sometime they would have an End; and the greater our Happiness were, the more it would trouble us to think of parting with so great Possessions. Indeed if the Happiness of Heaven were such as this upon Earth, and so mixt with bitter Ingredients, it were not amiss it should be as short; but being so excellent, it would scarce be any Happiness at all, if it were not also *eternal*.

To

† Cor. 4. 18.

To consider then, That so vast a Treasure of Joy and glory, should One Day be exhausted, and we again as poor and miserable, as heretofore in this Life, would imply a Contradiction, and turn Heaven into a State of Grief and Misery. But God hath so wisely ordered Things, That the empty Delights of this World should be temporary, and the great and substantial Delights of the World to come should be as lasting as they are excellent, † *An exceeding and eternal Weight of glory.* All the glory of this World is nothing in Comparison of the Things above, where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God. Col. 3. 1.

THE Place of Happiness is proportionable to the Happiness itself, equally unconceivable, for those Eternal Habitations are not made of earthly Matter, but the Builder and Maker is the mighty God

God, who is infinite in Power and Wisdom. He is able to make them glorious and commodious, beyond any thing we can imagine. We may be sure the glory of the Place will greatly add to the Happiness of it; and tho' the Heart of Man cannot conceive it, yet we may attain to some Apprehensions of it, which may inflame our Desires; that we who live in the Dregs and Sediment of the Earth, may look up for better Habitations, *even the bright Mansions of Heaven.*

FOR there is the Throne of infinite Majesty, and the Son of God reigning in the glory of the Father, with the Holy Spirit united in One glorious Being, which comprehends all Things; itself incomprehensible, and so glorious a Sight, our bodily Eyes could not endure it. * *No Man can see his Face and live: No Man can behold the glorious Essence of God in this State of Sin* and

* Exod. 33. 23.

and Weakness, the least glimpse of his glory would strike us dead with Amazement. But we shall be qualified for such a Vision, when the Image of God is perfected in us, *we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* 1 Jo. 3. 2.

IN the mean Time we are assured, That Heaven is exceeding glorious; it is the City of the great King, whose Majesty is infinite, a Place of such Splendor and magnificence, That all the Princes Courts in the World, and the glory of them put together, would not make so much as a faint and imperfect Shadow of the Court of Heaven. The Holy Spirit gives us a Prospect as clear as may be to our weak Sight, and helps us to conceive it, by applying the best measure here to behold; and and we may see by the Eye of Faith, That this Measure is infinitely short, and our Thoughts infinitely surpassed, altho' so well assisted to conceive the *heavenly glory.*

There

† THERE is an Account of the New Jerusalem, the most glorious Description, that ever was put into writing, and represents a Place of Beauty, Lustre and Splendor, beyond the reach of human Thought, as being dictated by the Holy Spirit ; yet after all it is but figurative and by way of analogy, being set forth by pure Gold and precious Gemms, all which come as far short of Heavenly Glory, as a piece of common Clay comes short of the brightest Gemm in that Description. *The City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to Shine in it ; for the Glory of God did enlighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof, v. 23.*

THE Lamb of God is his Sacrifice, whereby his Infinite Justice is satisfied, * and being justified by his Blood, we are saved from Wrath through him: Christ is joined with God under the Title

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of the Lamb, and he must really be God or he could be no Saviour, He is one with the Father, seeing none can forgive Sin, but He against whom it is committed. † He is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World, and he is equally joined with the Father in all glory, He is the Light of Heaven, which needs must have been from everlasting. Therefore he is the Eternal Son of God, *There shall be a Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from Everlasting, Mic. 5. 2.*

THIS is a most clear and unquestionable Prophecy of the Messiah, which asserts his Divinity, as equal with the Father, by an eternal generation. It is in the Hebrew, whose goings forth have been from the Days of Eternity. He must be the same with God who could be such a Saviour, as to give Eternal Salvation, or else he is superiour

God himself, as the Doer of the greatest Work. It must be the same one God, who hath the same Power, and is qualified by Omniscience, † to be Judge of all the World, He must be One with the Father, who is the King of Heaven, and ruleth the Kingdom of God. || *It is the Kingdom of his dear Son. * the Son of his Love, and he is Lord, to the Glory of the Father, Phil. 2, 11.*

From

† according to the Greek, || Act. 10, 24.
2. Tim. 4. 1 * Col. 1, 13.



From the whole Discourse
there are two particular
INFERENCES.

*First, That we are to believe in
Jesus Christ, as the Son of God,
of One Essence with the Father,
really and properly his own Son.
Rom. 8. 32.*

*Secondly, That altho' this Son of
God hath wrought our Salva-
tion, yet there is a Duty belong-
ing to Men, to prefer the Hea-
venly Life, and to seek it above
all Things.*

FIRST, Supposing the Truth
of the Scriptures, which have
been sufficiently proved, this is a De-
monstration, That Christ being cal-
led the Son of God, and so stiled by
him

himself, it must be understood, really a Son by Nature, of one Divine Essence, eternally existent with the Father, and distinguished from all Created Beings. For, altho' there be many Sons of God, yet Christ is the only begotten Son, and hath the same Power ascribed to him, that belongs to God alone. And altho' it is not expressed in the plainest Words, for which there is good Reason ; yet it is expressed in the strongest Terms, of more force than plain Words ; since plain Words may be misunderstood, or perversely wrested by those, who are unwilling to believe. It is to be wondred, that any should doubt of Christ's Divinity, who expect Pardon and Salvation from him.

THERE is indeed a great difficulty, in the Doctrine of the Trinity, a Mystery above our comprehension. But we have Divine help to believe it, and we have also Reason to believe it, which join
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together in our *Faith*. We may believe this Doctrine, if we rightly believe in God ; because we take God's Word for it, and the Evidence of his Works, the Miracles of Jesus Christ, and his Apostles confirming the same thing by their Miracles wrought for and by the *Name of Jesus Christ*. Our own Reason inclines us to believe it, as being most agreeable to our State ; for what could we Poor Creatures do, when we depart this Life. How should we meet the Almighty and terrible God, who is offended at our Sins, without a Saviour equal to God, and that can be none but another Person, *in the same Deity*.

BUT if Christ is not *one in Nature* with the Father, and only a created Being, he would be infinitely inferiour, and yet superiour in Honour, *we believe on him to Life everlasting*. He could not have so much ascribed to him, as to make him equal with God, if he is not a Son of One Nature with the Father

ther, His Titles would be needles,
yea, industriously blasphemous. He
is so often stiled *Lord*, and so emi-
nently as God is, He is *Lord of all*,
Lord of glory, *Lord of Life*, *the*
Lord from Heaven, God and Sa-
viour, joined in the same Power,
Grace be unto you and Peace from
God our Father, and from the
Lord Jesus Christ; *and they that*
are with him, are called and chosen
and faithful. 1 Cor. 1, 3. Rev. 17,
14.

THEREFORE this is the
right *Faith* in Christ, upon which
Salvation depends, that He is the
real Son of God, and by Nature E-
ternal with the Father; we must
believe in Him, as he is. He is a
Mystery unconceivable, yet we
may attain to this *Faith*, if we be-
lieve the Scriptures, because they
cannot have any other meaning.
For this Son of God made all things,
and therefore, He himself was not
created. All things were created
by him and for Him; He is before
all

all things and by him all things consist. By a natural Union with the Father, He doth all things belonging to God. He is our Redeemer, Preserver, Sustainer ; in him we are chosen, adopted, blessed; *and whatsoever ye do in word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Col. 3, 17.*

Secondly, ALTHO' the Son of God hath wrought our Salvation, yet there is a Duty belonging to Men, to prefer the heavenly Life, and to *seek it above all things.* For so we must be qualified, to receive the Benefit of Christ's Sacrifice. If we seek the Kingdom of God, we must also seek the Righteousness thereof. There must be Obedience to old Commandments, and gratitude for new Mercies, that we may live in this World, as agreeable to the future State; we must serve God in Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. We must raise our Minds above the Earth, and prepare for the heavenly

Life

Life, † setting our Affections on Things above: *For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus.* Phil. 3. 30.

THOSE that are washed in the *Blood of the Lamb*, must acquire a Purity of Heart. || Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God, * and every one, that hath this Hope, purifieth himself even as He is pure. Not that we can be perfect here; but we must use sincere Endeavours to keep all the Commandments, and be in some Degree good Men; we cannot be legally pure and free from all Sin, yet the bent of our Hearts must be to Holiness. We cannot be made perfect, till this Body of Sin be put off, but we must go on toward Perfection, and the Work begun here will be compleated in Heaven, *where by one Offering*
B b Christ

† Col. 2, 3. || Mat: 5, 8. * 1 Jhon 3. 3.

Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. 10. 14.

It belongs to Purity of Heart, and is a necessary Qualification for Heaven, that we value it above this World, as most worthy of our Desires. It is doing Justice to God, rightly to value his Kingdom. But there is great Iniquity in an inordinate Love of this World. It is very sinful Injustice, to set our Hearts upon this World, and prefer it's fading Vanities, before an Eternal Weight of glory; to neglect our Father's Business, and our Business of Eternity, for the sake of this present World. It is quite opposite to the Will of God, † Heaven his Throne, and the Earth is his Footstool. If Men esteem what is lowest with him, and condemn his glory in the highest, they cannot expect to *see the Kingdom of God* Jo. 3. 3.

IF we reflect upon temporal Enjoyments, such as Riches and Honour or Power, innocent Delights (as they are called) sensual Pleasures, and even Wisdom it self, how empty and defective shall we find them all! † Riches are often kept to the Owners hurt, not increased without Care, nor kept without Fear, nor lost without grief ; yet how frequently do they make themselves Wings and fly away ! And then as to Honour and Power, they are generally the Marks. that Envy's Bolis are levell'd at, and are often hit ; and besides they are uneasy to the Possessors, being troublesome to manage, difficult to keep, and dangerous to part with.

INNOCENT Pleasures used to excess lose their Innocency and become sinful , they cloy the Appetite and leave a sting behind them, and much more sinful and unlawful Pleasures, * All these at last become

† Eccl. 5. 13. * Eccl. 12. 12.

come weariness to the Flesh, and Men are still to seek for Satisfaction. Knowledge and Learning might seem to be the sweetest Pleasures of Human Life, but there is nothing perfect here below ; nay even these also are Vanity, as he assures, who had the greatest share of them, saying, † that in much Wisdom there is much grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth sorrow, || *And what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth a little time and then vanisheth away, our Time passeth away like a shadow, Psal. 144, 4.*

Now what is this Point of Earth, in comparilon of Heaven? Much less is our Portion here, and all that we can possibly attain. Heaven is incomparably beyond all that we falsely call Happiness here below. All the Enjoyments of this World are mixt with Trouble and disappointment ; so that the best of
them

† Eccles. 1. 18. || James 1. 4.

them grow cloying and troublesome to us. But the things above are free from those sharp and bitter mixtures, which abate the Comforts of this Life. The Happiness of Heaven is pure and perfect, having nothing to embitter or obscure it. Why should we set our Hearts upon this World, and be guilty of so great Iniquity, as to prefer Earth before Heaven ! *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Mat. 16, 26.

THE Loss of the Soul is never to be repaired ; all the World cannot redeem it, when this Time of Tryal is finish'd : They are in the greatest Danger, that are covetous of this World, because they regard not the World to come. † Take heed and beware of Covetousness ; for a Man's Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he poss-

† Luke 12. 15.

possesseth ; but on the contrary, wealth destroys both the present and future Happiness, if the Man wants spiritual *Wisdom*. Riches render Vertue more difficult, and Men more unwilling to learn it ; they add strength to Temptation, and Weaken the resistance; they make the broad way of Hell much broader, and turn the Strait Gate of Heaven into a Needle's Eye. † It is hard for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God, because he is hardly to be converted, and they will never obtain Heaven, who chuse rather *to mind earthly things*: Phil. 3, 19.

A great Love of this World destroys the Love of God, || If any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him; they, that set their Hearts upon this World, will rather follow worldly Inclinations, than obey God's Commands; they will not so far deny them-

ves

† Mark 10. 25. || 1 Jo. 2. 15.

yes, as to do what they must do, if ever they will be sav'd. † They set at nought his Counsel, and would none of his Reproof. They hate Knowledge, and chuse not the Fear of the Lord. || They reject the Counsel of God against themselves * and will not come unto Christ, that they might have Life. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, that refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven. Heb. 12: 25:

THE Will of Man is of vast Consequence; God requireth an Act of the Will, to submit to his Authority, and to make no Opposition; there is no Virtue without a Will, nor Obedience without a willing Mind; and altho' we cannot chuse perfectly, yet we may do it acceptably, God knows our Weakness

† Prov. 1. 25. || Luke 7. 30. *
Jo 5. 40,

ness and will consider it. Children cannot attain to the Virtue of their Parents, whilst they are young and childish; but yet their feeble Attempts are very grateful to them. Much rather will God accept of the good Will of his Children, altho' they come far short of Perfection, *† seeing he is our Father in Jesus Christ, || and the only Son of God is our Advocate:* Our Weakness will recommend us, if we are willing to amend it, and endeavour to do better: If we chuse to serve God, he will give us more Strength, *Come unto me, saith our Lord, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Mat. 11: 28.

WE cannot give God his just due, and it is a Mercy that he will accept of us: We cannot avoid loving this World, nor altogether mind heavenly Things: But we can come unto God in some Manner

er, and love him more than this World; we shall be very unworthy, if we love him less, and less value His Kingdom. We must give him the Preference, and rather obey him than the World, when they stand in Competition, and command different Things. We have sufficient Encouragement, to resist the Temptations of the World, having received the Promise of an eternal Inheritance. *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God: Heb. 3.12.*

WE have no more to do, than What is done for this World. If any Man value this present Life, should he not as much Value Eternal Life? We need only change the Object, and Value Heaven as worldly Men value this World, and this World as little as they value Heaven. Many acts are the very same, that are done for worldly Interests, which may be done for the Glory of
C c God,

God, and this determines their Vertue ; for no act can rise higher, than the Principle from whence it flows. The Word of God will teach us to chuse the better part; and our own Reason will tell us, which is most reasonable, to serve God or this World, and whether will be our the greatest Happiness, to have our Portion in this World, or an *Inheritance incorruptible, reserved in Heaven for us.* 1. Pet. 1. 4.

NATURE it self teacheth us, that we ought to look up to Heaven, and despise the Earth we tread upon. This Life is not worth having, unless it were in order to a better, and it's goods are not worth our pursuit, but as an help to another Life. We are indeed of heavenly Extraction, and are here serving out our time in order to be fellow Citizens of Heaven, † *we are going to Mount Sion, and to the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and*
to

† Heb. 12. 22.

to an innumerable Company of Angels. It were unpardonable Injustice, to settle our affections upon Earth, and despise the heavenly glory. If we despise the Favour of our King, and the Priviledges of his City, we shall justly forfeit *the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.*

YET we need not neglect the World for God's sake, if we do not neglect God for the sake of the World. God is very kind to Sinners, to allow Time for necessary Business, and a reasonable Enjoyment of this World. But this World must not ingross all our affections, and all our Labours. We must have the greatest regard to Heaven, and to the God of our Salvation. † If any provide not for his own and especially for those of his own House, he hath denyed the Faith and is worse than an Infidel; because he disobeys a Revealed Law, when the Gentiles do by Nature the things
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contained in the Law. But then as the same God our Saviour saith, *He that loveth Father or Mother, son or Daughter more then me, is not worthy of me,* Mat. 10. 37.

SURELY that State is infinitely more desirable, and ought to be preferred, which is the Perfection of Happiness. The Kingdom of God is revealed for this very purpose, to engage our Affections. The Glory of it is set forth in such a Light, as to invite us to look up to Heaven, and oblige us to every Duty, that is agreeable to the future State; shall we make the Word of God of no Effect, and despise the Riches of his goodness? They must needs forfeit Heaven, that have so little value for it, and what is this World, that any should value it so much, as to quit his Interest in Heaven? *All Flesh is Grass, and all the goodlines thereof is as the Flower of the Field; the Grass withereth and the Flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; but the Word*

Word of our God shall stand for ever.
 Isa. 40. 7.

THE Word of God is not to be spoken in vain, and despised by his little Creatures, when he would make them great in his Kingdom. Contempt of goodness makes unworthy Men vastly more unworthy.

* But all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; all have in some degree neglected their own Salvation. Therefore as Repentance is necessary for every failing, so it is upon this particular, which hath a share in every Sin, that we love this World too much, and have not enough sought after God. We must also remember, that without his Help we cannot attain and must apply to the Throne of grace. For every good Gift, and every ~~good~~ perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights. James 1. 17.

IT

It was a great Article of our Saviours Business in the World, to bring us to a sense of our inability, without God's Assistance, to any thing great or good. Therefore He permitted St. Peter's Fall, who was so confident of his Courage, and thought so well of his Fidelity; yet both fail'd him, altho' his failing being foretold, he might the better have fortified his Mind. Being then weak in our selves, we are taught to avoid all Pride, and Confidence in our selves, to depend upon God, and pray without ceasing, *|| that he may keep us from falling, and humble our selves in his sight, that he may exalt us in due Time.* 1 Pet. 5. 6.

God hath so framed this World, as the Sin of Man gave Occasion, and Man's Liberty required, which is to be govern'd by Reason, and to honour the Creator, in order to his Happiness. There are difficul-

ties

ties of Knowledge, and Difficulties of Practice, to exercise our Vertue, and yet oblige us to a Dependence upon God. † He hath made this World to pass away, and not capable to satisfy, that we should not Place our Happiness in it, but having Experience of the World's Vanity, we should seek it in himself and in the Wildom of pleasing him, *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom and the Man that getteth Understanding.* Pro. 3. 13.

THIS seems to be the *Chief Happiness*, that God hath intended in this world, which is to be found in himself and in his Service, and which every Man might find, if he would rightly look after it. For God is no respecter of Persons, but wou'd have all Men to be equal, and is bountiful to all Men, in this Principal Happiness. As for the inequality of Conditions in this Life, none ought to think themselves un-

† 1 Cor. 7. 31.

unhappy in the lowest State. † Because this Life is but a Moment, and the goods of this World are but a Trifle, in comparison of Eternal Happiness, || Having Food and Raiment, let us be therewith content, since we may be in Favour with God: ‡ since Heaven is open to us, and *the Best Christians will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Mat. 18, 1.

THE Gentiles spoke many good Sentences, but could not rightly apply them, because they knew not God, nor had any good Notion of another Life. They had often sublime Thoughts, which are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures; but never could make them effectual, to establish Happiness in the Mind. It is a noble saying of *Seneca*, * we ought to employ our whole Life in learning how to die. This

† Punctum est quod vivimus, & puncto minus. SENECA. Dial. 39. 5. 9. 4

|| 1 Tim. 6. 8 ——— ‡ 1 Pet. 1. 4. 5. ———

⌚ Tota Vita discendum est mori. SENECA.

This is vain in the Mouth of a Heathen, who believes not a future State, as *Seneca* almost did not ; but nothing is more solid in the Mouth of a Christian, who chiefly regards that Moment, which is to decide his Eternity. Nothing but the Christian Religion can give us any real Comfort, which shews us the Glory of another World, where the whole Man will be restored, *after the likeness of Christs Resurrection.* Rom. 6, 6.

RELIGION was always the Chief Happiness of this Life, as Men thought themselves in favour with the Deity, and had Hopes of a future State, That was accounted the greatest Wisdom, and the greater was their Happiness, according to the goodness of Religion. Happiness is seated in the Mind, and no where to be found without,

† but in any Place with a sound Mind, that is fortified with Contentment. The Gentiles ascribed Happiness to Religion, in conjunction with Philology, and Vertue proceeding from it. But the Happiness was weak, as the Religion was false. The Jews were more happy, as they had Faith in the true God, and a Prospect of a Redeemer: But Christianity hath enlarged Happiness, by an increase of Knowledge, and an improvement in Vertue, *through the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ.* Rom. 15, 29.

THIS is the most perfect Wisdom, and the most excellent Philo-

10-

Quod petis, hic est.
 Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus.
 At Ulubris, you Happiness may find. (Hor.)
 If you can have but a contented Mind.
 Ulubris, a mean Village in Italy.

sophy, * which makes a Man happy in a World of trouble, by a well grounded quiet Conscience. It gives a Cheartulness of Mind, † which Solomon calls a merry Heart, ‖ and that doth good like a Medicine. It softens the Evils of this Life, and sweetens all other good things. It acquiesces in that State, wherein God hath placed us, and approves of all his dealings with Men. Cheartulness is a secret Praise of Providence, and thankfulness in all its Dispensations: It is a Resignation to the Divine Will, ‡ so that whatsoever pleaseth God shall please us, howsoever the World

* A philosophia Remedia morbis animorum adhibentur. Est enim quædam Medicina certe; nec tam tuit hominum generi inimica Natura, ut corporibus tot res salutare, animis nullam invenerit, Cic. Tusc. l. 4.

Bonum autem Mentis est Virtus, ergo hac beatam vitam contineri necesse est. Id. l. 5.

† Prov. 15. 13. ‖ prov. 17. 22.

‡ placeat Homini, quicquid Deo placuit

World frowns upon us; and it is supported by this good Reason, *That our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father hath loved us, and given us everlasting Consolation.* 2 Thes: 2, 16,

WE cannot pretend to Perfection; for as our Church truly saith, by reason of the frailty of our Nature, we cannot always stand upright, and our Happiness is so far defective, as our Holiness is short of Perfection: But the nearer we approach to Perfection, the more it is for the Honour of God, and the greater will be our Comfort here, and our Reward hereafter. Holiness and Happiness are inseparable, and as the one is increased, the other will be improved: It is not to be effected without pains, and it is most worthy of our Labour; Yet our main Dependence is upon God, and the Power of Jesus Christ. Our chief Vertue is Faith, and our Guide the Holy Scriptures. *The Scriptures are able to make you wise*

unto salvation through Faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 3: 15.

WE cannot depend upon our own Vertue, nor trust to our own Ability. Our Strength is Weakness, and our Virtues tainted with Sin; † because Sin dwelleth in us. Therefore Christ's Design was, not only to cleanse us from Sin, but also to teach us * Humility, a most proper || Virtue for Sinners; that we should have a due Sense of our unworthiness, and of God's Mercy towards us. His Sacrifice shews us the hainous Nature of Sin; because God would not accept of any less Satisfaction, nor without so great a Mediator. Sin renders us so odious in the Sight of God, that he will not admit us to approach his Presence, nor receive any Petition from us, but in the Name of Christ. Both our Prayers and our Persons must be presented to

† Rom. 7. 17. * Mat. 11. 19. || Ja. 4. 6.

to the Father, by an holy and undefiled Hand. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our sins,*
 1 Jo. 2. 1.

WE can have no Confidence in our selves, but we shall be worse by it, and fall lower by our Pride, whereby we fail of the Grace of God. || Men are destitute of the Truth, because they are taught to cry up good Manners, not in Conjunction, as it should be, but in Opposition to Faith. But this Morality is very weak and ruinous, having not Faith for its Foundation. For after all the Morals of Men have done their best, * it is by our Faith we must be justified, and by our Faith only, that we can bring forth good Works, such as will be accepted by the Favour of the Gospel, † the Righteousness of Faith. ||
 the

† Heb. 12. 15. || 1 Tim. 6. 5. * Rom. 3 28. † 4. 13. || 1 Cor. 6. 9.

The Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. *But it is God our Saviour, Christ with the Father, that is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless, before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy.* Jude 24, 25.

Now, altho' we are obliged to Duty, and to do the Work of Faith, yet we may think it a great Favour, that we shall be raised from Death to Life, and obtain *Eternal Happiness*. We are obliged by Gratitude, as well as by Precept, to honour God by our Obedience. We ought to judge it well for us, That we can be admitted into Heaven, upon the Intercession of the Son of God, with suitable Qualifications in our selves. It is a great Happiness here, that whilst we are doubtful in mind, what will become of us when we die, Christ comes in to our Relief, and speaks *Peace* to the troubled Conscience. This Happiness may be improved whilst

whilst we live here, to the Increase of Glory hereafter, *by growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2 Pet. 3. 18.

THE *Happiness* of this Life is reduceable to this one point, *the Knowledge of Jesus Christ*; whatsoever is called Happiness, this is the highest point of Man's Felicity, *the Acknowledgement of the mystery of God.* The Christian hath the true Notion of a future State, and what the admired Poet calls an Eternal Exile, the Christian knows to be *an Eternal weight of Glory.* He is contented with his Lot here, and cheartful in Afflictions, because he knows they will have a happy Issue; *Great is his Reward in Heaven.* In Death he hath a lively Hope, and need not fear any Terror. He will really have that Fortitude, which the Poet ascribes to be a Just Man, *when the Heavens shall pass away and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat.* 2 Pet. 3. 10.

Thus

Thus we find the chief Happiness of this Life, in the Wisdom of Religion; it is the Will of God, that our Happiness should consist in the Thing which is most agreeable to him, *the Beauty of Holiness*. It is most reasonable, that the Holy Faith and Duty, prescribed in his Word, should be our present Happiness, that there may be a Connexion betwixt Heaven and Earth, a Conformity betwixt this Life and the next; That the same Happiness, which is begun in this Life, should be increased in Heaven, and become an eternal Happiness. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, and as he that hath called is holy; so be ye holy in all Manner of Conversation.* 1 Pet. i. 15.

This is that Happiness, by which one Man may be more happy in a Cottage, than another in a Palace, who hath not this *Blessing*, the Wisdom of Religion: And altho' Wealth is rather to be chosen
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than Poverty, yet this Wisdom is rather to be chosen than Wealth, when they cannot justly be united. All earthly goods are nothing, in comparison of a good Conscience; and the poor Man need not envy the Rich, nor will the Rich despise the poor Man, *if they be wise unto that which is good*: A Quiet Mind is the chief Happiness of this Life, and a bad Conscience is the the greatest misery of this World; and this a foretaste of future misery, as the other is of future Happiness. Wherefore, laying aside all Envy and Malice, as new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, *that ye may grow thereby in all spiritual wisdom..* 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

LET no Man then inconsiderately presume, That he can be happy in any vicious Way, which best pleaseth his own Mind; let none expect Relief in Faith, whilst he disobeys the Rules of the Gospel, nor depend upon a late Repentance. No Man that understands the Word, can ever Judge, that *Faith* excuseth Sin

Sin, for that his Morality needs not Fairb. We are so far from Happiness, as we depart from God by Sin; and as we cannot be entirely Holy, neither can we attain to Happiness, except we take Sanctuary in the Church of God, and believe on Christ for the Remission of Sin. To Him give all the Prophets Witness, that through his Name whosoever believeth in him shall receive Remission of Sin. Acts 10. 43.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of Sinful Men, grant unto thy People, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost Promise, that so among the sundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

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